

BINGANG



Club Crosby

December 1994

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The photograph of Bing Crosby on the front cover is from Mark Scrimger's collection.

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Bingang

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Member of:



Readers Write

Dear Wayne,

The days I treasure the most were the days when I was growing up in the late 40s and early 50s, because there wasn't a single radio station that didn't devote a portion of its broadcast day to Bing Crosby records.

Growing up in Paterson, NJ, we got all the New York and New Jersey stations. The most popular Bing Crosby record show on the air in the late 40s and early 50s was on WNEW AM (1130 on your dial). It followed one of the biggest names in D.J. programming: Martin Block and his *Make Believe Ballroom*. Bing was on from 11:35 a.m. to 12 noon (5 days a week). I'll never forget that almost every day they would play "Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie." Everyone listened to it, and all the other radio stations copied from this show.

WAAT, 970 AM, from Newark, NJ had Bing on every afternoon from 3:05 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (7 days a week) and twice a day on Sunday. From 11:05 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. they would play the older Bing items, hosted by Llye Reed, and then the regular programming was at 3:05-3:30. In addition WAAT offered its listeners an hour show called *The Stars Sing*, featuring 15-minute segments of Eddie Fisher, Perry Como, Bing Crosby and Tony Martin. Bing sang six days a week from 12:30-12:45 p.m.

WMCA (570) AM featured an hour of Bing seven days a week from 5-6 p.m. every afternoon. WBNX (1580 "on everybody's dial") also had Bing as did another station on Sundays with a show called *The Battle Of The Baritones*.

WTIC (Hartford) had a *Crosby Corner*. WCBS in New York had Bing on every evening at 7:30 introducing his own records with some swell chatter from Ken Carpenter. The list goes on and on.

Yes, there wasn't an hour in the day when you couldn't hear the voice of Bing Crosby singing into your heart. As a matter of fact you got to know him so well that you felt he was one of your best friends.

As music changed in the mid 50s, with rock and roll and the ever-increasing popularity of Frank Sinatra, these programs started to fade, with Sinatra record shows replacing the Bing shows. But thanks to such fellows as Ernie Sutkowski, Bing "keeps coming back like a song."

—JEFF GEIST, Elmwood Park, NJ

Dear Wayne,

Just before our long awaited issuance of a Bing stamp I want to express my sincere gratitude for keeping old Bing so "alive" to us, that gratitude first to the Good Lord Creator, then to the people of varied technologies, starting with Edison, and then to all of you at *Bingang*, Gonzaga, and other Crosby societies. The Postal Service stamp merely puts the frosting on the cake of Bing's legacy, even though we thank the Postal Service less. Yet I'm sure Bing would have been glad to share stamp honors and "induction" with Jolson, Waters, Cole, and Merman. He was that way—"sharing the blame," as he put it.

During my 1947-49 office stint at Decca Records, New York, I was grieved to hear that Bing's original 5/29/42 black Decca master of Berlin's "White Christmas" could no longer be used for record pressings after the 1946 Christmas season. And I winced in 1947 (and ever since) upon hearing Bing's 3/19/47 re-recording of that Christmas classic—loud, forced, and groany as it is. Thanks to MCA and CD technology, we now have the original 5/29/42 "White Christmas" on MCA's 4-CD set.

And a final doff of my hat to Ken Twiss, in death joining old Bing and the great Berlin, whose talents did so much for the morale and Allied efforts of World War II, its G.I.s and upcoming "baby-boomers."

Bing was at his radio best in the Kraft Music Hall CDs reviewed in this issue and acquired by Laserlight (Delta Music, Inc.) through Gonzaga's generosity and great Crosby collection.

—CARMEL GENE GALLEGOS, Tacoma, WA.

Dear Mr. Crossland:

Thanks to address lists I received from Club Crosby and the ICC I was able to come in contact with a few other Dutch Crosby people, and we had our first Crosby Day last June.

As it was a rather small group (only six people) I arranged the Crosby Day at my house. Around 11 in the morning everybody arrived, and everybody said goodbye at around 6 o'clock in the afternoon. We had a most enjoyable time together, watching a few rare videos, playing some audio cassettes, and (of course) talking about Bing all the time. Time really flew by!

It turned out to be such a success that we will have our second meeting in two weeks—this time at the house of Frans van der Kolff. We're all looking forward to it very much. It's so much fun to share Bing with others.

—ETTY GITS, Breda, Holland

The Editor's Page

BING'S STAMP. The Bing Crosby stamp issued by the U. S. Postal Service is now a *fait accompli*, and although most of us are not completely happy about it, at least we have the stamp in our stamp boxes and albums, not in the consideration files of the Stamp Committee, where it reposed for several years. The birth date is incorrect, but that's not unusual, since even Bing's tombstone is wrong. Have you noticed that all of the stamps in this series feature a drawing style that elongates the faces, making everyone look a little horse-faced—especially Bing and Ethel Merman. Bing's nose looks inflamed. The stamp is not perfect.

On the other hand, there is a nice, deep blue background which reminds us of Bing's "Where The Blue Of The Night." The color combinations on Bing's stamp are probably the best of the set. The others seem rather faded out. Check out the picture on the first-day cover printed in this issue. Who dominates the group of five?

Your editor admits to feeling a bit light-headed at the local post office the first part of September when the clerk whipped out the sheet of stamps without even being asked. (They know us there.) We bought several sheets, of course, and traded Jolsons for Crosbys to the International Al Jolson Society.

We know of one club member who went to 16 different post offices in the San Francisco Bay area to buy strips of stamps. He ended up with 280 Crosby stamps! Now it appears that postage rates will go up next month and we will have to paste a three-cent stamp alongside Bing!

Most of you probably know that Mildred Bailey was also honored with a stamp, issued in a jazz series that appeared about the same time as the pop singers. If Al Rinker were still alive he should be very proud to see his sister and his ex-partner so honored. Your editor is not very knowledgeable about jazz singers and didn't recognize many of the other people on Mildred's sheet.

Anyway, we have our Bing stamp. Isn't it kind of a thrill to stick one on an envelope?

How about a "White Christmas" stamp?

AN EXPLANATION. If your editor seems a little slower than usual, it is because he had a light stroke a few months ago. Medication (five pills a day) is helping to reduce the high blood pressure problem, but it has a tendency to cause one to feel a bit sluggish.

ANNIVERSARIES COMING UP. In 1996 we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of Club Crosby, and in 1997 we will observe the 20th anniversary of Bing's death. We need to be thinking about special projects and material to publish in *Bingang* during these anniversary years. Does anybody have any suggestions? Would any of you be willing to contribute towards a full-color cover, for example? Let's have your thoughts and ideas just as soon as possible, so we can start planning.

DEATHS. Larry Kiner's obituary has been published elsewhere in this issue. Here are some other deaths among those in the Crosby circle:

JACK ASH. Jack Ash's wife Ruth wrote that Jack died of cancer on October 16, 1993. They had been married for almost fifty years. He was a long-time Crosby collector and a faithful member of Club Crosby. His treasured Crosby collection (78s and LPs) are for sale, and Ruth would like to see them get a good home. If you are interested, write to her at 3062 Avenue V, Apt. 2C, Brooklyn, NY 11229.

MAURY FOLADARE, Veteran publicist to stars such as Bing Crosby, has died. He was 86. Foladare met Crosby in 1930 when the singer was with the Rhythm Boys at the Cocoanut Grove, and worked for him until Bing's death in 1977. He continued publicizing the annual Bing Crosby Golf Tournament. "Crosby was a very nice man, but he didn't like publicity," Foladare once recalled. "Often I'd set up an interview and then I'd find out Bing had gone out the back way and left us there." (Submitted by Russ Rullman.)

VIRGINIA DALE, actress and dancer who appeared with Bing and Fred Astaire in *Holiday Inn*, died of complications from emphysema on October 3. She was 77. Although she appeared in several other movies, her role opposite Bing and Fred proved to be her most prominent movie part. She also appeared on television in the 1950s. (Submitted by Daniel DeLugish.)

MARTHA RAYE, singer-comedienne, died of circulatory problems on October 19. She appeared in three movies with Bing: *Rhythm On The Range* (1936), *Waikiki Wedding* (1937), and *Double Or Nothing* (1937). The veteran performer, who traveled thousands of miles during World War II and Korea entertaining American troops, was buried with full military honors. (Submitted by Daniel DeLugish and Mark Scrimger.)



Swingin' (On A) Star

The Road To BING CROSBY

By William Ruhlmann

This article originally appeared in the December 24, 1993 issue of *Goldmine*. It is being reprinted in serial form by permission of the author and the editor of *Goldmine*. The type has been reset without editorial changes except for those approved by the author. A few minor typos have been corrected. Original pictures have not been used.

PART TWO

Realistically, Crosby's attempt to go solo was inevitable. He notes that he was emboldened in his stance against Abe Frank by the offer he had received from comedy film maker Mack Sennett to appear in some of Sennett's short, two-reel films. Crosby turned to this work immediately, shooting six shorts for Sennett, each of which took a week to make and brought him \$750. Sennett would space the releases of the films out over the next couple of years, a wise move given Crosby's increasing popularity during the period. The first of the shorts, released in 1931, was named after Crosby's latest recording with Gus Arnheim, "I Surrender, Dear." The song, cut on January 19, 1931, was another co-composition by Harry Barris, and it made the Top 10, spending 10 weeks on the hit parade. It would also serve to advance Crosby's career in an unexpected way.

On March 2, 1931, Crosby cut the DeSylva-Henderson-Brown song "One More Time" with Arnheim; it was another hit. On the same day, he cut a session under his own name, recording "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" and "Just A Gigolo." The resulting single became Crosby's first to chart for him as a solo artist: "Troubles" went to #4, "Gigolo" to #12.

Crosby had settled the competition for who would

become his personal manager by convincing his brother Everett to take the job, and one of Everett's first tasks seems to have been securing a recording contract for him. As a result, on March 30, 1931, Crosby cut his first session for Brunswick Records under the eye of its A&R (Artists & Repertoire) director, Jack Kapp, resulting in Brunswick 6090, "Out Of Nowhere"/"If You Should Ever Need Me." The A-side spent three weeks at #1, establishing Crosby with record buyers as a new singing star.

Crosby did, however, cut one more session with Gus Arnheim, which resulted in his duet with Arnheim "girl singer" Loyce Whiteman on "Ho Hum!" and another Top 10 hit.

Crosby had left Arnheim when he was seen on film performing in a movie shot after work hours during his Coconut Grove days in 1930 but released in 1931. This was United Artists' *Reaching For The Moon*, in which Crosby is glimpsed singing Irving Berlin's "When The Folks High Up Do The Mean Low Down."

Crosby's next screen appearance served as a promotion for his second Brunswick single, "Just One More Chance." The second Sennett short, *One More Chance*, featured him singing the song. He also sang it for a feature, *Confessions Of A Coed*, released by Paramount, but it was cut from the film. The song became Crosby's second straight #1 hit. (Its B-side, "Were You Sincere?," also charted.)

It was the Arnheim recording of "I Surrender, Dear," however, that brought about the next step in Crosby's career. There are two versions of the story. Crosby's is that his brother Everett, in an attempt to interest the CBS radio network in him, sent the recordings of "I

Surrender, Dear” and “Just One More Chance” to CBS head William Paley. Paley’s version (accounts of which are given in Sally Bedell Smith’s Paley biography, *In All His Glory* [Touchstone, 1990], and in Ulanov) is that, while sailing to Europe in June 1931, Paley happened to hear “I Surrender, Dear” wafting out of a stateroom and, finding out the singer’s name, wired back to New York to have him signed.

According to Sally Bedell Smith, word came back that Crosby had a drinking problem and was unreliable, but Paley insisted and Crosby was signed to do a 15-minute show once a week for \$1,500 each, even though \$100 was the going rate. Ulanov says it was \$600 a week.

Meanwhile, Crosby continued to make recordings for Brunswick in L.A. On June 12, he cut his third Brunswick single, “I Found A Million-Dollar Baby,” which broke his #1 streak by only hitting #2. (Its B-side, “I’m Through With Love,” got to #3.) On June 24, he cut “At Your Command,” which restored him to #1. (Its B-side, “Many Happy Returns Of The Day,” also got to #3.)

By August 19, Crosby had moved to New York to begin the CBS radio program, and he cut a Brunswick session that produced both sides of his next single, “Star Dust”/“Dancing In The Dark,” as well as the A-side of its follow-up, “I Apologize.” (The B-side, “Sweet And Lovely,” would be cut on September 14.) All these songs went into the Top 10.

Crosby was set to start his radio show on August 31 at 11 p.m. But at show time it was announced that he was ill and would not appear. The same announcement was made on September 1, and Crosby didn’t make his national radio debut until September 2.

Once again, there are various stories about why he didn’t appear. According to Ulanov, the long arm of Abe Frank had reached to New York with the still-unresolved “unfair” listing from L.A., despite efforts toward a settlement, and it took a ruling from the musicians union to get Crosby on the air. According to Crosby himself, that situation had been resolved already, but he had been singing in nightclubs for several nights before the broadcast and then rehearsed in an air-conditioned room so that “when I was ready to go on I couldn’t push any noise out.” According to Sally Bedell Smith (quoting Paley), Crosby was drinking, even on the September 2 show he finally showed up for. Paley, however, refused to fire Crosby and instead assigned him a 24-hour-a-day guard. “It worked,” said Paley. “He knew his job was at stake.”

If Paley is to be believed, the reason why he may have refused to yank Crosby is that the singer was hired specifically to compete against another “crooner” (as people were starting to call all the smooth-voiced radio singers) on rival NBC, also at 11 p.m. His name was Russ Columbo and, curiously, he had been a violinist in Gus Arnheim’s band back at the Cocoanut Grove the year before.

The suggestion has been made that Columbo, whose voice is described as identical to Crosby’s, might, with his Italian good looks, have occupied the position



Bing Crosby in a formal portrait (1931)

Crosby eventually did had he not been killed in a freak accident. In fact, though contemporary accounts emphasize the similarity in their voices (and though they recorded much of the same repertoire in 1931-1932), they sound distinctly different. As Ulanov writes, “Russ’s was a soft, sweet voice, Bing’s a rougher, stronger, more vigorous one, always informed by jazz phrasing.” Further, Columbo never really competed with Crosby in record stores. Only one of his records, “Good Night, Sweetheart,” outpaced Crosby’s version, and by the summer of 1932, he had stopped having hits. He was not killed until 1934, by which time, though he had made several films, Crosby had also outdistanced him as a film star.

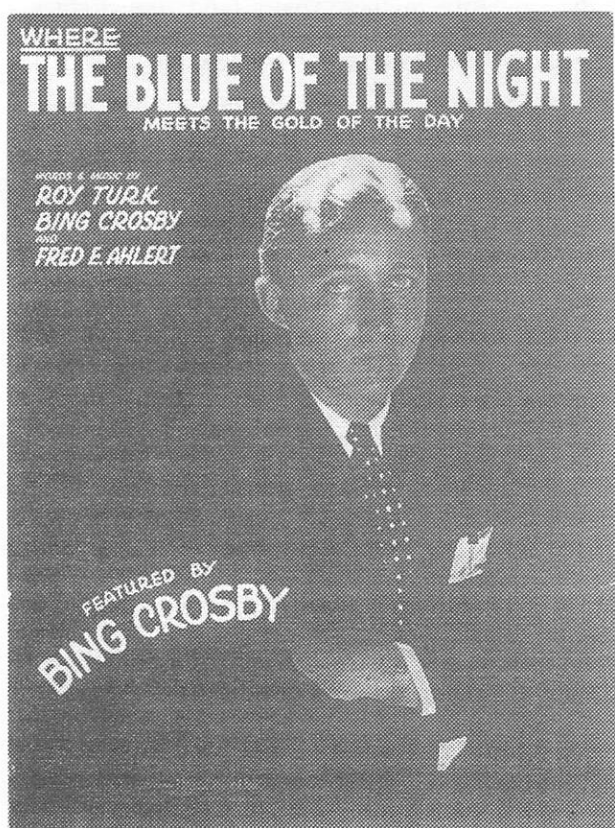
Crosby’s real competition in 1931 was Rudy Vallee, who had a two-year lead on him and a well-established radio presence. But even Vallee, who had seen Crosby back at the Montmartre and been impressed, knew Crosby had more of an appeal than the collegiate style he embraced. “I knew it was only a question of time before he would completely eclipse me,” Vallee said, “and eclipse me he did.”

Despite the apparently rocky start to his radio show, Crosby, who had gone on the air on a “sustaining” (i.e., unsponsored) basis, acquired a sponsor in November, when Cremo Cigars agreed to underwrite his show, which now ran for 15 minutes starting at 7:15 p.m., every day except Sunday. In the meantime, he had done three Brunswick recording sessions in October. The first, on October 6, produced the hit “A Faded Summer Love,”

the second produced his version of "Good Night, Sweetheart," which got to a respectable #5 against Columbo's #3 (though both were beaten by Wayne King's instrumental version, which spent seven weeks at #1), and the third featured Crosby with many other singers doing medleys of songs from *George White's Scandals*.

When Crosby began singing for Cremo on November 2, he opened with a song he had a hand in writing called "Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day." The tune bears a distinct resemblance to "Tit-Willow" from *The Mikado*. He recorded it on November 23, and it became his theme song.

Along with recording and doing the radio show, Everett arranged for Crosby to take on a 10-week engagement at the Paramount Theater as MC and singer at \$2,500 a week. This seems to have begun around Thanksgiving 1931. Crosby did four shows a day. (For its money, the audience got to see both a stage show and a movie.) In its issue of November 30, *Variety* called him "the leader among the current flock of popular song baritones on the air" and said he was "as pleasant to hear on the stage as on the radio. . . Crosby is also at home in a tux and fronts okay." *Variety* continued in its characteristic style, "At the Paramount in a presentation constructed around him, he sings five numbers. He didn't register in the wallop way with this picture house audience, but they liked him enough to qualify the booking." Enough, in fact, that the run eventually was extended for another 10 weeks (at \$4,000 a week), and ended up running a total of 29 weeks.



Bing Crosby's theme song

Crosby still found time to record, however. On December 16, he did a session with the Mills Brothers that resulted in the #1 hit "Dinah," and on December 21 he recorded its Top 10 B-side, "Can't We Talk It Over?" with Helen Crawford at the organ. On January 21, 1932, he cut "Snuggled On Your Shoulder (Cuddled In Your Arms)," which also reached the charts. And on February 11, he sang "St. Louis Blues" with the Duke Ellington Famous Orchestra. Crosby's Cremo Cigar show continued until Saturday, February 27. Starting on Monday, February 29, he was sponsored by Chesterfield Cigarettes, and the show ran a less strenuous four times a week, skipping Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. (Later it was cut to three days a week, and then to two.)

On February 29 he cut "Shine" with the Mills Brothers. This paean to an African-American shoeshine boy may make the 1990s listener cringe, though it was not considered offensive at the time, and one must recall here, as in, for example, the many occasions when blackface makeup turns up in Crosby films, on him and on others, that racial attitudes in the 1930s were different in ways that cannot easily be approximated today. Crosby has been taken to task, by Louis Armstrong biographer James Lincoln Collier for one, for inappropriate racial views, but (as is frequently the case with Collier), his facts are sometimes in error, and actually few can have been as comfortable with racial equality in the '30s as Crosby was, as his willingness to record with Ellington, the Mills Brothers and others (and theirs to record with him) attests.

On March 15, Crosby cut "Paradise," which like "Shine," hit #7 in the charts. The weekend of April 23-24 found Crosby in Chicago, where he did sessions for "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "Lazy Day," among other tracks, with the Isham Jones Orchestra. Both were hits, the former getting to #2. ("Waltzing In A Dream," also cut at this time, would be a hit in the fall.) He was back in Chicago May 25-26 for his last session of the spring, recording "Cabin In The Cotton," "Love Me Tonight" and "Some Of These Days," all of which charted.

Crosby did his last Chesterfield show for CBS on July 27, after which he seems to have gone to Hollywood, where he had been contracted to appear in a Paramount film called *The Big Broadcast* in which, appropriately, he would play a radio singer who sings "Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day." (Ulanov says he had made a quick trip out to shoot the film in the late winter, but it's hard to reconcile that with the day-in, day-out schedule of the New York-based live radio show. There were no red-eye airplane trips between the coasts in 1932.)

Paramount liked what it saw on the set of *The Big Broadcast* and signed Crosby to a five-picture deal for three years at \$300,000. (Later, it would be extended.) Paramount was one of the "big five" studios, along with MGM, Warner Brothers, Universal and 20th Century Fox. It was run by Adolph Zukor and Jesse Lasky and was known, among the studios, as one that liked to sign unknown talent and develop it rather than maintain big

stars, a tendency exemplified by its willingness to let its first big star, Mary Pickford, leave when she demanded a higher salary. This helped make its financial status uncertain and, in fact, it went bankrupt in 1933 and was reorganized. It was due primarily to Crosby, however, who became its biggest star, that it was able to recover as the '30s went on.

Nevertheless, he must have seemed an unlikely savior in 1932, even with his motion picture experience and radio and record stardom. Early on, he had been rejected for pictures because his protruding ears made him difficult to photograph. He was also, at the age of 29, noticeably losing his hair. While Crosby rejected having incisions made behind his ears to cause them to lie flatter against his head (many stars, notably George Raft, had the operation), he did agree to have his ears glued back with spirit gum, for the first few pictures, anyway. And he wore toupees, though he never wore them off-screen and looked for any excuse to wear a hat in a film.

With his work in *The Big Broadcast* complete and Everett negotiating with CBS about renewing his radio contract, Crosby took a vacation in the late summer, then went on a national tour in the fall. On September 16, he was in San Francisco, where he cut "Please," a song he also sang in the film. "Please" entered the charts on October 8, and *The Big Broadcast* was released in theaters on October 14.

"Please" rose to #1 and stayed there six weeks, making it the biggest hit Crosby had had yet and the biggest one he would have for another two years. The cross-promotional impact of Crosby's records and his films had begun, and it would continue for more than two decades.

Until *The Big Broadcast*, fans had for the most part only heard Bing Crosby, not seen him. The film served to solidify his image. Crosby's character is what Robert Bookbinder, in *The Films of Bing Crosby* (The Citadel Press, 1977), calls a "crooning heart throb."

"The main problem in the story," Bookbinder writes, "is that easygoing Bing seems as irresponsible as he is talented. . ." Sounds familiar. But, notes Bookbinder, "The plot. . . is an admittedly incidental little affair whose sole purpose is to pave the way for the crooning of Bing Crosby."

The result was a box office hit that led to a series of *Big Broadcast* sequels, only one of which would feature Crosby.

The singer was back in New York by October 14, when he cut a session including "Here Lies Love," his third song from *The Big Broadcast*, which became a hit, and "(I Don't Stand) A Ghost Of A Chance," which went into the Top 5. On October 25 he cut "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" from the musical *Americana*. This, of course, was the song that defined the Depression, which in the fall of 1932, with Franklin D. Roosevelt only days away from election, was at one of its lowest points. Unlike Rudy Vallee, who appended to his recording a spoken introduction in which he distanced



Brunswick--Bing's record label from 1931-1934

himself from the striking E. Y. Harburg lyric, Crosby sang the song straight; both versions topped the charts.

On November 4, Crosby cut "Just An Echo In The Valley," which followed "Brother" into the charts and hit #2. On December 2, he opened at the Capitol Theatre in New York where, for the first time, he worked with an up-and-coming vaudeville comedian, Bob Hope, whom he had met at the Friars Club earlier. The two did a comedy routine and found they had a considerable chemistry onstage and off.

Prohibition ended on December 5, 1932, and, though it may be coincidental, one ceases to hear stories about Crosby's drinking around this time, too. It seems obvious that, with his increased responsibilities, he would have had less time for it, and then too, his wife was already pregnant with their first child, adding family responsibilities. In any case, though Crosby continues to exhibit his fun-loving style on film and on many of his recordings, his reputation as a "drunk" becomes a thing of the past.

Crosby cut "Street of Dreams" on December 9, and it became a minor hit. By the end of the year, negotiations with CBS had been concluded, and Crosby returned to the air on January 4, 1933. He appeared twice a week, every Wednesday and Saturday, through April 15.

Crosby's next massively successful single, "You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me" (#1)/"Young And Healthy" (#2), recorded January 12, in a sense marked the opposite side of reactions to the Depression from his last #1, "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" Both songs were from the lavish movie musical *Forty-Second Street*, and they constituted as much a denial of the Depression as "Brother" did an expression of it. Crosby was accompanied for the tracks by Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians, with a third charting song, "You're Beautiful Tonight, My Dear," also being recorded at the session.

On January 26, Crosby turned to a jazzier backing for his next single, "I've Got The World On A String," which featured the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, with



Bing Crosby and Eddie Lang

Bunny Berigan on trumpet. "You've Got Me Crying Again," cut February 9, had a more conventional backing. Both were minor hits. Crosby returned to the Dorseys on March 14 to cut "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn"/"Stay On The Right Side Of The Road."

Crosby's steady accompanist, brought along on recording sessions and radio shows, had been guitarist Eddie Lang, formerly of the Whiteman orchestra. On March 26, Lang died unexpectedly due to complications from a tonsillectomy. As far as Barry Ulanov (who was the editor of the jazz magazine *Metronome*) was concerned, the loss of Lang was the pivotal factor in a change in Crosby's musical style.

"With Eddie's death," Ulanov writes, "something else died in Bing's life. He didn't lose interest in jazz, but became less a part of it. The commercial entertainment world had already made large inroads in the Crosby singing style, but until Eddie died he was still pre-eminently a jazz singer. . . . When he returned to Hollywood . . . Bing's private jazz world was just about finished." Had Lang lived, Ulanov speculates, Crosby would have maintained greater ties to jazz, been more accepting of bebop when it arrived in the late '40s (the time Ulanov's book was written) and, perhaps, been less popular. "A gain?" he asks, "A loss? It depends on your musical attachments."

But Lang's death, though it comes at a crucial time, is probably less significant in the change in Crosby's music than his move from being a New York-based radio and recording star to being a Los Angeles-based radio, recording and film star. New York remained a hub of jazz, especially after the rise of swing in 1935, but Crosby increasingly turned to novelties and specialty material written for his films. Sometimes, especially after James Van Heusen and Johnny Burke entered the picture as his personal songwriters, the material was first-rate, but often it was mediocre, and it was almost never jazz. For better or worse, that change was in the works before Lang's death, and before Crosby set foot on the train that took him back to the West.

When Bing Crosby returned to Los Angeles in the spring of 1933, he came to stay. It was time to take up that five-picture deal at Paramount, time to build a home (in the Toluca Lake section of town) and start a family. Crosby launched into the making of the first film in which he would have a legitimate lead acting role, *College Humor*. Of course, he would also sing. And he would be backed by a strong supporting cast, here including comedians Jack Oakie and the team of George Burns and Gracie Allen (Burns and Allen had also appeared in *The Big Broadcast*). Crosby insisted on sharing billing in his pictures, feeling he couldn't carry a film alone, and few if any of his films can be called star vehicles.

Crosby held recording sessions on June 9, 13 and 16, during which he cut songs from *College Humor* and others. There were "My Love" and "Blue Prelude," as well as the self-mocking "Learn To Croon" and "Down The Old Ox Road," both from the film. All made the Top 10. But his most successful single of the summer was "Shadow Waltz" (#1)/"I've Got To Sing A Torch Song" (#9), both Al Dubin-Harry Warren songs taken from the film *Gold Diggers Of 1933*.

Crosby was still making *College Humor* when his first son, Gary, was born in June. Though Gary, in his *Mommy Dearest*-like anti-memoir, *Going My Own Way* (co-written by Ross Firestone, Doubleday, 1983) remembers his father frequently being absent when he was growing up, it's worth noting that, unlike 99 percent of professional musicians, Crosby was almost never on the road when his children were growing up. From 1933 until the '40s, when he embarked on tours to cheer servicemen and sell war bonds, Crosby lived at home with his family. Sometimes, in reading Gary's book, which chronicles Crosby's admitted strict (though never abusive) disciplining of his children, it's hard to tell whether Gary feels he didn't see enough of his father, or whether he saw too much of him.

College Humor marked the beginning of a flood of films Crosby made steadily throughout the '30s, usually at the rate of two or three a year. Many of them are forgettable, many in fact forgotten. Few have been made available on home video, and one can see them only if they happen to turn up on television, at which time they rarely reward close attention. There are exceptions, however.

Crosby went from making *College Humor* straight into his next feature, *Too Much Harmony*, which even Robert Bookbinder refers to as "a mildly enjoyable but thoroughly plotless formula picture." It had, Crosby himself noted, "two rememberable songs." These were "Thanks" and "The Day You Came along," both of which Crosby cut at a session on August 27, and which reached numbers 2 and 3 on the charts.

Crosby took a brief vacation after finishing *Too Much Harmony* and then launched into the making of *Going Hollywood*, which deserves comment for a number of reasons. The singer was loaned out to MGM for this picture, which was a vanity production for newspaper

magnate William Randolph Hearst starring his companion, Marion Davies. Crosby played (you guessed it) a radio singer and Davies his smitten admirer who follows him to Hollywood, where he has gone to become a motion picture star. In true Hollywood fashion, she replaces his prima donna co-star in his affections and in the picture as well.

It undoubtedly had the biggest budget Crosby had worked with, not only because Hearst and MGM were willing to rebuild New York's Grand Central Station on the MGM lot for the title song, but also because the real prima donna was Davies. "Our average day's shooting went like this," Crosby explained. "I'd show up at nine o'clock, made up and ready to shoot. At about 11 Marion would appear, followed by the entourage of hairdressers, make-up ladies, secretary and—a holdover from the silent days—a five-piece orchestra." The orchestra gave a short concert; it was now 11:30. Crosby and Davies would then "discuss the first scene with [director] Raoul [Walsh], who, up to that time, might have been leading the orchestra, or practicing driving golf balls into a canvas net on the set, or playing black-jack or rummy with a prop man and an assistant director."

That took until 12:15 or 12:30, at which point lunch was called. "Those luncheons were something," Crosby recalled, and he mentioned Rhine wines and Bombay duck among the delicacies. Hearst might drop in, or not. "Either way there was a plethora of conversation and an interchange of ideas about current events or social activities. But very little talk about the picture." It was now 2:30. Time to renew make-up and perhaps listen to the orchestra again. "At five we'd be ready to shoot the scene when Marion would suggest something refreshing. Nobody was ever loath, so, thus restored, we'd get the scene shot and start thinking about the next scene." It was by now six, and according to Crosby, everyone was raring to go, but Hearst didn't like to keep the crew overtime, so they'd call it a day.

If Crosby doesn't sound too disturbed about this, perhaps it's because Everett had negotiated a salary of \$2,000 a week for him, and shooting went on for nearly five months. It may also be because *Going Hollywood* was a hit when it was released in December, putting Crosby at #7 on the list of Hollywood's top money-makers and establishing him as a full-fledged movie star.

He was also, of course, still a full-fledged recording star, and in addition to the three hits that *Going Hollywood* threw off for him ("Beautiful Girl," "Temptation" and "We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines"), he also scored a double-sided hit with a song from the Broadway show *Ziegfeld Follies Of 1934*, "The Last Round-Up," coupled with the old standard "Home On The Range," and another hit with "Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?" from the film *Sitting Pretty*, all in the charts before the end of 1933.

Crosby also had gone back on the radio, beginning a weekly show for Woodbury soap on Monday nights as of October 16. He would continue through May 28,



Marion Davies and Bing Crosby
"Going Hollywood"

1934, take the summer off from broadcasting, return on Tuesday night, September 18 and continue once a week until June 11, 1935.

Meanwhile, in January 1934, it was time to start the next picture at Paramount. This was *We're Not Dressing*, co-starring comedienne Carole Lombard and shot, in part, on location at Catalina Island. A shipwreck saga, it actually made some acting demands on Crosby, which he fulfilled admirably. He also sang, of course, and among the song hits to emerge from the film were "Good Night, Lovely Little Lady," "Once In A Blue Moon," "Love Thy Neighbor," "May I?" and "She Reminds Me Of You," all of which reached the charts around the time of the release of the film in the spring, along with "Ridin' Around In The Rain." But Crosby's biggest hit of the period, his ninth #1 in three years, was "Little Dutch Mill," co-written by ex-Rhythm Boy Harry Barris. It topped the charts for five weeks.

Crosby's winning streak with good scripts continued with *She Loves Me Not*, which he shot in the summer of 1934, not only because it turned out to be a good picture, but also because it marked the first time that one of his films made the list of top-grossing movies of the year. And while he was making it, on July 13, his wife gave birth to twin sons, Philip and Dennis. (It's also notable as the film during which Crosby demanded that his ears no longer be glued back.) The film's hit songs were "Love In Bloom" (a six-week #1) and "Straight From The Shoulder," both of which were cut on July 5, the day Crosby also cut the minor hit "Give Me A Heart To Sing To." The session was Crosby's last for Brunswick records.

Crosby had come to rely on Brunswick recording director Jack Kapp. Kapp left the company when he was refused the presidency and made a deal with the English Decca record company to start a new, U. S. Decca division. The Depression continued to keep record sales low, and Kapp's idea was to cut prices drastically,



Bing Crosby and Jack Kapp

issuing Decca discs for 35 cents. His plans hinged on being able to sign high-profile talent right away, and he persuaded several Brunswick acts to jump ship, the biggest of whom was Bing Crosby. On August 8, 1934, Crosby cut Decca 100, the label's debut record, "I Love You Truly"/"Just A-Wearyin' For You," as well as Decca 101, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart"/"Someday, Sweetheart." Neither were hits, but Decca 245, "Two Cigarettes In The Dark" and both sides of Decca 179, "The Very Thought Of You"/"The Moon Was Yellow (And The Night Was Young)," were, and Crosby would be the label's flagship artist for 20 years.

Crosby's third film of 1934, *Here Is My Heart*, was not of the caliber of *We're Not Dressing* and *She Loves Me Not*. But it did provide him with three more hits, "Love Is Just Around The Corner," "With Every Breath I Take" and his biggest hit yet, the seven-week chart topper "June In January."

Mississippi, which Crosby filmed in early 1935, is notable both because he managed to share screen time with W. C. Fields without losing every scene to him and because he got the chance to sing an excellent Rodgers and Hart score that included the hits "Soon" (another #1), "Down By The River" and "It's Easy To Remember." Crosby seems to have been easing back from the pace of the last couple of years during the spring and early summer of 1935. Except for his Woodbury soap radio show, which ended its run June 11, he wasn't much heard from until August, when he worked on perhaps his least impressive film, *Two For Tonight*, and cut its soundtrack songs in a far more memorable recording session.

Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey had split acrimoniously the previous spring, but Crosby brought them together for one last attempt to patch things up at a recording session on August 14. It didn't work, but it did result in the hits "I Wished On The Moon" (which Crosby performed in *The Big Broadcast Of 1936*), "Without A Word Of Warning," "I Wish I Were Aladdin" and "From The Top Of Your Head." On November 12 and 13, Crosby was back in the studio with the Victor Young Orchestra to cut sessions that would result in his next three chart hits: "Red Sails In The Sunset" (a #1), "On

Treasure Island" and, over his objections, "Silent Night, Holy Night." Crosby's brother Larry, now working as his publicist, suggested setting up a charity fund to benefit missions in China, though this was later ruled illegal by the government, after having donated more than a quarter of a million dollars. In the meantime, Crosby's five commercial recordings for Decca of "Silent Night, Holy Night" became some of the biggest record sellers of all time, with estimates of seven to ten million copies sold.

Crosby had been off the air since June, but on December 5, he made his first introductory broadcast as part of *The Kraft Music Hall*, moving from CBS to NBC's "red" network. (In 1944, NBC's "blue" network would split off and become ABC.) *The Kraft Music Hall*, begun in 1933 with Paul Whiteman as host, was an hour-long variety show requiring much more of a host than previous efforts by Crosby. Crosby took over from Whiteman after sharing duties with him for four shows. He became sole host as of the program of January 2, 1936, and thereafter was on most Thursday nights for the next 10 years, what he called a "long, fat decade." (The program was cut to a half-hour at the start of 1943.)

Crosby was out of the recording studio for the four months between November 13, 1935, and March 24, 1936, probably spending his time organizing the radio show and shooting his next picture, a version of Cole Porter's hit Broadway musical *Anything Goes* in which he co-starred with Ethel Merman. Crosby did not record the songs separately for once, presumably because the score, featuring such standards as "You're The Top" and "I Get A Kick Out Of You," was already overly familiar to record fans. (There had been four hit versions of "You're The Top" in 1934 and 1935, for example.)

Crosby's next chart entry, in April 1936, was "Would You?" from the film *San Francisco*. He also scored with "Robins And Roses" (#2) and, surprisingly, "It Ain't Necessarily So" from George Gershwin's recently opened (and closed) folk opera *Porgy And Bess* in the spring and summer of 1936.

Crosby's next film, *Rhythm On The Range*, provided his next three hits. As its title implies, *Rhythm On The Range* was a Western, and if you have trouble seeing Bing Crosby in a role perhaps intended for Gene Autry, you're not alone. Crosby would not appear in another Western for 30 years. (In fact, Crosby's appeal, though broad, tends to be strictly contemporary to his own time. He is usually ill at ease in any sort of period piece, unless, as in *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court*, he gets to play virtually a contemporary character anyway.)

Nevertheless, the score included Johnny Mercer's "I'm An Old Cowhand," which Crosby took to #2 and immortality in a recording made with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, his backup band for the new radio show. Dorsey also backed Crosby for the Top 10 "I Can't Escape From You" and a third hit came from "Empty Saddles." As part of Jack Kapp's diversity campaign (eventually, Crosby would record songs—good, bad and indifferent—in nearly every possible genre of the day)

and perhaps to rev up for an upcoming film role, Crosby cut two sessions of Hawaiian songs on July 23 and August 4 with the Dick McIntyre Harmony Hawaiians, resulting in the singles "Song Of The Islands" and "South Sea Island Magic."

On August 19, he recorded "Me And The Moon" at a session that also found him cutting a duet single with Dixie Lee of the wonderful Jerome Kern-Dorothy Fields songs "The Way You Look Tonight" and "A Fine Romance." These represented Dixie Lee's last efforts in the world of entertainment.

Meanwhile, Crosby spent the summer on the film *Pennies From Heaven*, which turned out to be totally forgettable except for its title song and three other tunes—"Let's Call A Heart A Heart," "So Do I" and "One, Two, Button Your Shoe"—all four issuing from the songwriting team of composer Arthur Johnston and lyricist Johnny Burke.

Burke would become one of Crosby's closest friends and collaborators. Twenty-seven years old in the summer of 1936, Burke had gone to the University of Wisconsin, performed in vaudeville and worked his way up to the Ziegfeld Follies. He also had been a pianist for Irving Berlin. Before settling permanently in California, he had made a songwriting trip in 1930, when he had written songs for one of Dixie Lee's films, *Let's Go Places*. To a large extent, from 1936 on, Bing Crosby was the mouthpiece for Johnny Burke's lyrics, though the relationship must be understood as a collaboration. "The most successful device" for his lyric-writing, Burke told Barry Ulanov, "was to listen to Bing's conversation and either take my phrases directly from him or pattern some after his way of putting words together."

It was a successful device. "Pennies From Heaven" spent 10 weeks at the top of the hit parade, making it Crosby's biggest hit yet, a record that lasted about five months, until the release of a song called "Sweet Leilani" in the spring of 1937. The song, by Harry Owens, was featured, at Crosby's insistence, in the minor effort *Waikiki Wedding*. Its other hit tune was "Blue Hawaii," which would be revived 25 years later by Elvis Presley.

Crosby seems to have concentrated more on recording than on filming in 1937, making two minor films, *Double Or Nothing* and *Dr. Rhythm* (which was released in 1938). But he recorded 30 songs at 11 recording sessions, and he hit the charts 20 times, including the #1 hits "Too Marvelous For Words," "The Moon Got In My Eyes" (a Burke lyric from *Double Or Nothing*), "Remember Me?" and "Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?)" (the last with Connee Boswell).

The move more toward recording and away from film continued into 1938. It may be reasonable to speculate that, especially with the kind of material he was getting from Burke and from his friend Johnny Mercer (who wrote "Too Marvelous For Words," for example), he was more interested in making records than continuing to turn out the relatively low-quality scripts Paramount was offering him.

Whatever the reason, in 1938 (which saw his fourth

son Lindsay born in January), Crosby seems to have filmed only *Sing You Sinners*, which Bookbinder calls a "serio-comic contemporary drama" that placed greater emphasis on his acting skills, and perhaps *Paris Honeymoon*, which was released in 1939. At the same time, he cut 48 new songs at 16 recording sessions. Significantly, he branched out at these sessions to record more with other people. More records were cut with Connee Boswell, plus ones with Frances Langford and Johnny Mercer, and Crosby even did a session backed by his brother Bob's orchestra.

The result was 16 more chart hits, including, from *Sing You Sinners*, the #1 "I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams" and the Hoagy Carmichael-Frank Loesser masterpiece "Small Fry," plus a #1 revival of Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (with Boswell singing and Eddie Cantor speaking) and the introduction of the standard "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby."

Crosby's movie work picked up in 1939, a year in which he made three films. The first two, *East Side Of Heaven* and *The Star Maker*, were unremarkable, though they delivered their share of good songs written by the team of James V. Monaco and Johnny Burke, among them "East Side Of Heaven," "Sing A Song Of Sunbeams," "That Sly Old Gentleman," "An Apple For The Teacher," "A Man And His Dream" and "Go Fly A Kite." All of these were chart hits, the biggest being Crosby's duet on "Apple" with Connee Boswell, which hit #2. Crosby's other big hit of the year, also at #2, was "What's New," the Johnny Burke lyric written to "I'm Free," an instrumental hit by Bob Crosby Orchestra member Bob Haggart.



Bing Crosby and friend
"Pennies From Heaven"

Crosby certainly didn't slack off of recording in 1939—he cut 45 songs at 15 sessions and reached the charts 27 times—but his song choices included chestnuts such as “The Star Spangled Banner” and a host of rerecordings of songs he'd done in the '20s. The most notable development on the recording front for Crosby was his pairing with the Andrews Sisters in a session on September 20, 1939, that produced a single of “Ciribiribin”/“Yodelin' Jive.” It was a modest beginning to what would be a classic partnership.

Still, one can't escape the feeling that, as the end of the decade approached, Crosby seemed creatively exhausted, both as a recording artist and as a film star. He had demonstrated enormous talent and done some excellent work in both fields, but he had also fallen into the mediocre and the formulaic. Especially given the twin distractions of his overwhelming success and his consuming interest in sports—by now he had become heavily involved in horse racing and even his biographical nemeses Shepherd and Slatzer admit he was a good enough golfer to turn pro—Crosby seems to have needed the impetus of a strong partner or two to push him toward his best work.

In music, there were Johnny Burke, his musical director John Scott Trotter and, to an extent, Jack Kapp (though it was Kapp who picked a lot of the dreck Crosby dutifully recorded). But until November 1939, there seemed to be no one to help inspire his film work. That was when he was paired with Bob Hope, by now an up-and-coming comic actor at Paramount, to make a picture called *Road To Singapore*.

Leslie Townes Hope was born in Eltham, England, a few weeks after Bing Crosby turned up in Tacoma. Raised in Cleveland from the age of four, Hope went into vaudeville, onto radio and, in 1938 to Hollywood and the Paramount lot, where he began appearing in one film after another, starting with *The Big Broadcast Of 1938*. There were three more films that year, and three in

1939, the last and most successful of which, *The Cat And The Canary*, opened around the time that Hope went before the cameras with Crosby.

Road To Singapore began life as a script by Frank Butler and Don Hartman called *Beach Of Dreams* about the prodigal scion of a wealthy shipping family and his sidekick who travel around the South Seas dodging his family and fiancée. By the time it had been retitled *Road To Mandalay*, Fred MacMurray and Jack Oakie were pencilled in for the leads. When Crosby was attached to the project instead of MacMurray, there was a thought to put him back together with the comedy team of Burns and Allen. But they proved unavailable, and Hope was elevated from the B-movies he'd been making to the second banana role in an A-project.

Released in the spring of 1940 to runaway box office success, *Road To Singapore* retained something of the original story—more of a plot than any of its successors would have—but its drawing card was the comic interplay between Crosby and Hope, who brought in their gag writers from their radio shows to add jokes. Trading quips with the goggle-eyed, wise-cracking Hope, Crosby achieved an ease before the camera he'd never had before. *Road To Singapore* made Hope a movie star, and it catapulted Crosby (only three of whose '30s films had landed on end-of-year top grossing lists) into the biggest movie star of the '40s.

With it, Crosby went back to work in earnest. There were two more movies released in 1940, *If I Had My Way* and *Rhythm On The River*. And there were no less than 19 recording sessions, usually producing four new tracks each. The highlights of this output included the #1 hits “Sierra Sue,” “Trade Winds” and “Only Forever” and a four-part recording of Earl Robinson and John LaTouche's “Ballad For Americans.” There were also Western songs, Hawaiian songs and old standards.

But Crosby's most important recording session of 1940 may have been the one he held on December 20, at which he recorded three songs Johnny Burke had written with his new partner, James Van Heusen: “You're Dangerous,” “You Lucky People, You” and “Birds Of A Feather.” Two and a half weeks earlier, Crosby had cut another Burke-Van Heusen song, “It's Always You,” and all four appeared in the second “Road” picture, *Road To Zanzibar*, which opened April 11, 1941.

Road To Zanzibar retained the basic structure of its predecessor, especially the romantic triangle between Crosby, Hope and Dorothy Lamour. In fact, from 1940 on, it began to seem that, in nearly every musical comedy Crosby made, there was a similar triangle or some minor variation, whether his male counterpart was Hope, Fred Astaire, Danny Kaye or Donald O'Connor. It was a structure that allowed Crosby, as he liked, not to have to carry the picture alone.

But *Road To Zanzibar* differed from *Road To Singapore* in that, along with the exotic locations, its dominant feature was the Crosby-Hope repartee. Nothing else in the picture really mattered, certainly not the excuse for a plot, and not even Crosby and Hope pretended it did.



Increasingly in the "Road" pictures, Hope would break down the "fourth wall" of fiction and make remarks specific to the public's knowledge about the two stars themselves. Most people liked *Zanzibar* even better than *Singapore* as a result.

None of Burke and Van Heusen's songs from the films were hits, however, an occurrence attributable to their having been banned, along with all ASCAP songs, from radio play in 1941. The Association of Composers, Authors and Publishers, responsible for licensing copyrighted songs for public performance, was in a dispute with radio over fees that year. The eventual result was the formation of rival Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI). But in the meantime, established artists like Crosby, all of whose material was ASCAP, suffered.

It may have been in anticipation of the dispute that Crosby had conducted a record seven recording sessions in December 1940. He then stayed out of the studio until May 1941, when he began cutting songs from his next film, a fictional depiction of the turn-of-the-century New Orleans jazz scene called *Birth Of The Blues* that would be one of his personal favorites among his movies. (Note when you watch it that, even though it's a period piece, Crosby is wearing '40s-era clothing.)

Pop's biggest star managed to hit the charts another 19 times during 1941, but, largely due to the radio ban, his records were less successful, only one of them, "Dolores" (cut with the backing of Bob Crosby's small band, the Bob Cats, in December 1940) getting as high as #2.

Crosby was away from his radio show, out of the recording studio and away from the movie set in August, September and most of October 1941, during which time he sailed to South America alone, looking for race horses.

It had been increasingly apparent that the United States would not be able to stay out of the world war that had been going on for two years now, but Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7 still was a shock to the country. For Crosby, the event made a drastic change in his work. *Birth Of The Blues* opened on December 10, and he already had his next film, *Holiday Inn*, in the can, awaiting a summer release. On his radio show, though Crosby was present in Los Angeles for the two live broadcasts (one for the East Coast, another, three hours later, for the West Coast), he began to travel extensively, entertaining troops at military bases around the country and singing at war bond rallies. His absences from the show in February and again in May may be attributable to these efforts. (The show concluded for the summer on June 25 and didn't go back on the air until October 1.)

Crosby's recording activities were cut back in 1942 due to the musicians union strike that went into effect on August 1. Nevertheless, he did manage to hit the charts 11 times, and in May, before the strike began, he cut the Decca Records versions of the songs featured in *Holiday Inn*.

Since the film is now shown on television invariably during the time around Christmas, one might have

assumed that *Holiday Inn* would have been a late-in-the-year release rather than a summer film. Go figure. For 20 years, songwriter Irving Berlin had nursed the idea of a country inn run by a lazy entertainer who opens it only on holidays, and when he got around to bringing it to Hollywood, he controlled every aspect of the film, including picking the lazy star—Bing Crosby.

The format called for Berlin to provide songs for every holiday, one of which, "Easter Parade," had already been successful for him. But he wrote others, for Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, for New Year's, for Christmas. The last was the most difficult, according to his biographer, Laurence Bergreen (*As Thousands Cheer: The Life Of Irving Berlin*, Viking, 1990), not because as a sometimes-practicing Jew, he lacked affinity for the holiday, but because he recognized that it would have to be a great song. Berlin succeeded by recalling the way he longed for a traditional Northeast Christmas season when he was in Hollywood, as the introductory verse of the song (omitted in the film) makes clear. And so, out came the idea: "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas. . ."

Of course, Berlin was not unaware, especially after Pearl Harbor, of the implications of the song's sense of longing and separation to a nation whose sons and husbands and brothers were now for the most part in boot camp. But especially because of the film's August 4, 1942, release, "White Christmas" did not immediately jump out as a hit song. It did, however, when the summer was over. (Actually, Crosby had premiered the song, singing it just once on his radio show on Christmas Day, 1941, long before the film opened.)

Bing Crosby's recording of "White Christmas" entered the charts on October 3, 1942, and hit #1 on October 31 for the first of 11 weeks, making it, in its initial release, the biggest hit of Bing Crosby's career and among the most popular recordings ever made. But that was only the beginning. "White Christmas" re-entered the charts in December of every year through 1951, hitting #1 again in 1945 and 1946. It was back in the charts in 1953 and continued to chart every Christmas season through 1962. By now, it has sold an estimated 30 million copies and is by far the best-selling single record of all time. (In 1947 Decca became aware of damage to the metal mold—often referred to as the "matrix"—due to wear from the large number of pressings that had been made. Crosby recut the song, using the same arrangement and performers as before, and it is the later version that takes over the single's second catalog number, Decca 23778, from then on, appearing on subsequent LP reissues as well. Two other versions of "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby also appeared on Decca in the *White Christmas* and *A Christmas Sing With Bing Around The World* albums.)



*To be continued in the next issue
of this journal.*

The *Goldmine* Story

We are indebted to member Bill Hunt for this copy of the remarks made by Bill Ruhlmann at the “Rhythm On The River” dinner in Fishkill, N.Y. on July 30, 1994. The event was sponsored by the Bingthings Society. Mr. Ruhlmann has given us permission to print his speech.

* * * *

Thank you, Bill. I’m here at Bill Hunt’s invitation, and I confess that the real reason I came is that Bill told me he had bought 27 copies of my article about Bing Crosby from the Christmas Eve issue of *Goldmine*, and I felt that when somebody buys that many copies of your magazine, you ought to come and thank him personally. They told me at *Goldmine* that the Bing issue was one of the five biggest-selling issues of the year, and they were very surprised at that. I think I understand how it happened.

Bill asked me if I’d say a few words just to tell you about how the article came about, since, I guess, from the point of view of the Crosby community, it came out of the blue. The article, which runs about 20,000 words, is pretty typical of the kind of features I’ve been doing for *Goldmine* over the last decade, and since it takes a while to research an article that long, by the time I’ve published one, I’ve usually forgotten what got me started working on it. At first, I couldn’t recall the inspiration for the Bing article. One reason, of course, is obvious. If you race cars, you want to race at the Indy 500. If you’re a mountain climber, you want to climb Mount Everest. If you’re a music journalist, you want to tackle the major subjects, and I can’t think of a more major one than Bing Crosby. Also, as a record collectors’ magazine, *Goldmine* had to tackle him at one time or another. Few people have sold more records.

So, obviously, there needed to be a major article about Bing in *Goldmine* sometime, and I would naturally want to write it. But after thinking back, I realized what had actually inspired me to propose the article, and how long it had been percolating in my mind. The thing that got me thinking about Bing was simple: I got mad at Michael Brooks.

I guess some of you know who Michael Brooks is. He works on reissues for Columbia Records. And I hasten to add that, having met him, I find him a nice man. But what happened was that, in September of 1988, I got a press release from Columbia announcing that they were going to release a boxed set of Bing’s music, and I was very excited about it because a lot of that stuff hadn’t been available for a very long time, some of it not at all. I was writing about music for a small newspaper at the time, and I interviewed Brooks and wrote up an article about the album, which you’ll recall was called *The Crooner: The Columbia Years 1928-1934*. But when I sat down and read the liner notes Brooks had written, I became very upset.

Now, many of you are aware that an earlier version of those notes had won Brooks a Grammy Award for best album notes in 1978. But that didn’t stop me from disliking them. They were full of irrelevant personal comments; they were vulgar and disrespectful; they brought up and exploited negative rumors about Bing under the guise of dispelling those rumors; and they simply failed to provide context and commentary on the recordings. The Grammy voters may have loved them; I thought they stunk.

So, that was really what got me going on Bing. In a conversation with *Goldmine*’s editor, Jeff Tamarkin, I talked about those notes and what was wrong with them, and he said, as he often does, “Why don’t you write an article that does what you think should be done?”

As I say, that was in 1988. And that began a gradual process of reading books and articles and buying and listening to records. I didn’t spend the next five years preparing the article full-time, but every time I ran across something for it, I put it aside. Jeff and I always talk about future articles, and they get scheduled and re-scheduled. When we finally set December 1993 for the Bing Crosby article, I spent an intense five weeks going over all the materials and writing and re-writing and writing again.

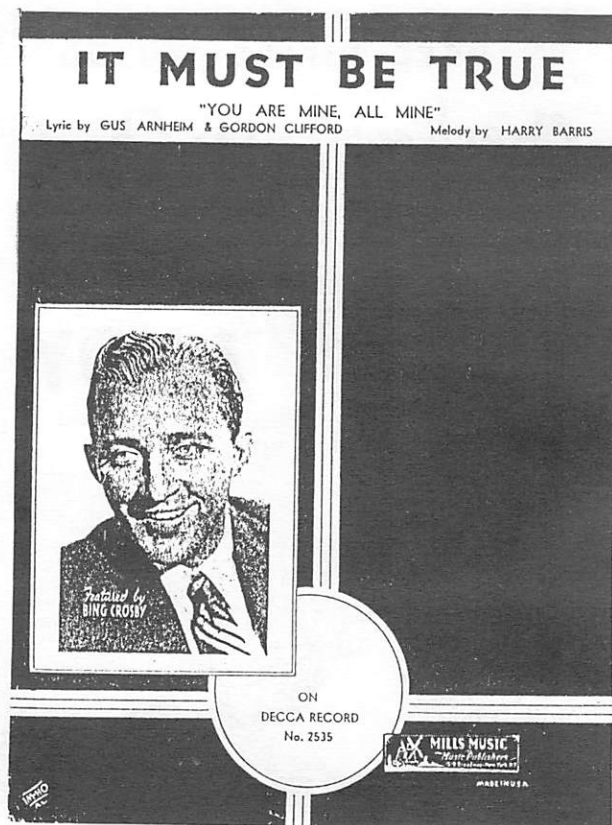
Beyond simply telling Bing Crosby’s story from the point of view of his discography, I felt I had two main tasks. One was to reclaim Bing’s reputation from some of the unfounded or exaggerated criticisms made of him since his death. The anger I felt over Michael Brooks’s liner notes was nothing compared to what I felt when I read *The Hollow Man* and *Going My Own Way*. So, I felt a corrective was needed. Second, I wanted to try to get across to them Bing’s significance, how big a star he was—in music, in film, in radio. All at the same time—and to try to do that now, at a time when some of his major accomplishments, radio for instance, are all but invisible to people.

I didn’t realize that the article would come out at the height of a sudden resurgence of interest in Bing, due to the MCA boxed set and the Disney channel special. But I’m not surprised that people seem to be turning back to Bing Crosby after a temporary lull in his reputation. It must be a little ironic for you all to listen to Dennis Miller and Will Friedwald and Gary Giddins and me talk about how hip Bing Crosby is—you don’t need us to tell you. But I hope you’re pleased to be vindicated. The last ten years or so have seen a growing wave of interest in what’s been dubbed “classic pop”—Linda Ronstadt records, albums of pop standards, singers like Harry Connick, Jr. and Michael Feinstein singing old and new songs from before the rock and roll era, Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett seeing big upswings in their careers. Is it any wonder that the man who taught them all how to sing and swing is getting notice, too? It’s just too bad that Bing isn’t here to do MTV unplugged!

Even though he can’t be with us in person, of course, Bing will be appearing regularly in the near future. I’ve



1930



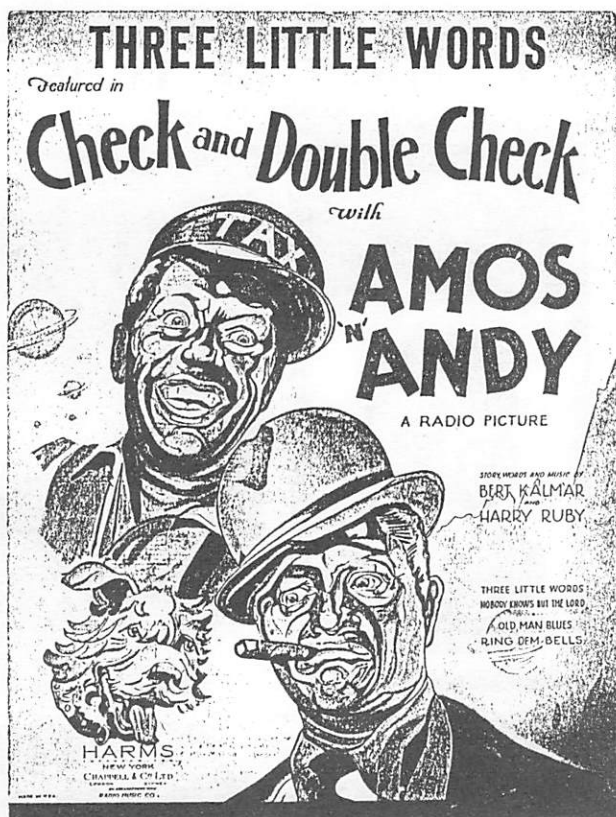
Reissue



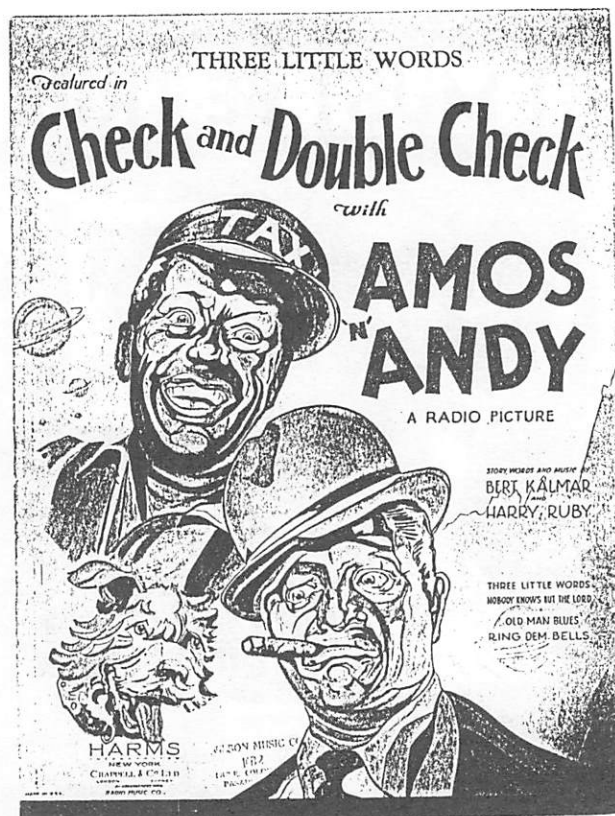
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1931



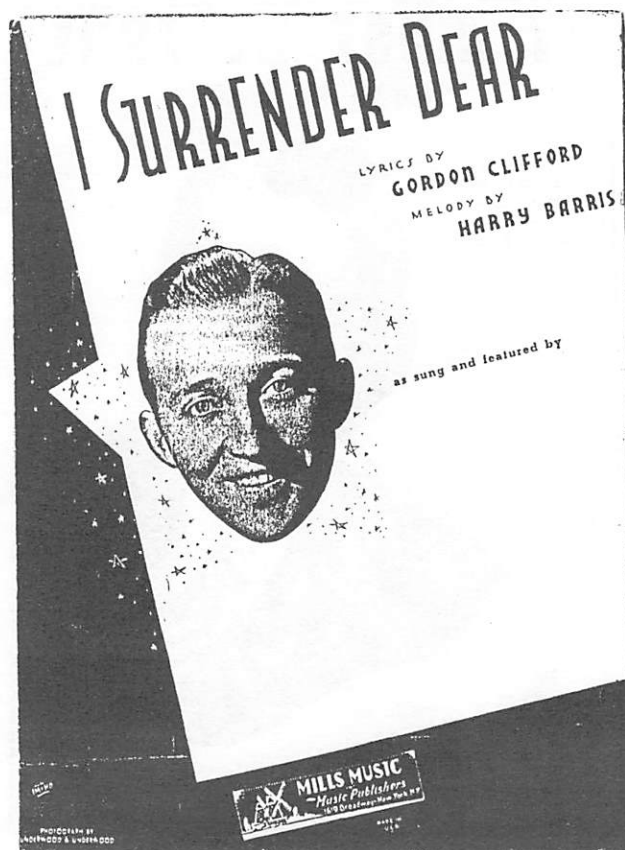
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1930



1931



Reissue

BING CROSBY SHEET MUSIC FROM THE ELLINGTON-ARNHEIM ERA, 1930-1931

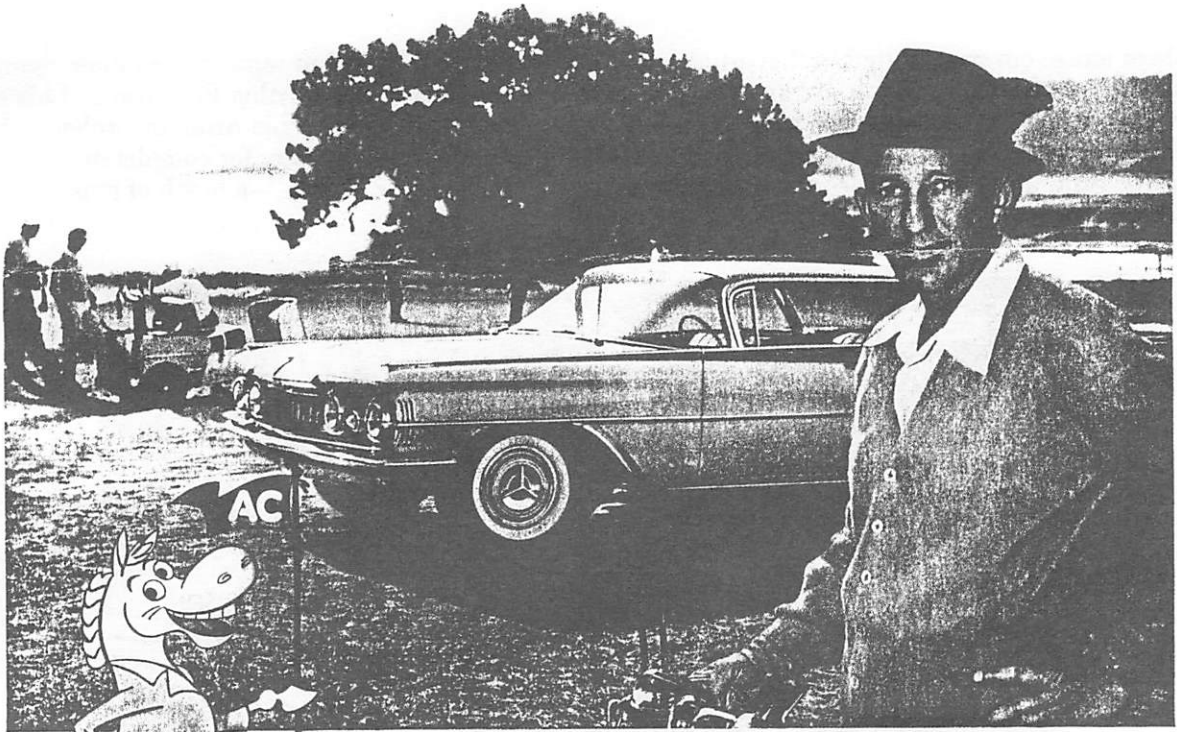
By Mark Scrimger

The sheet music covers pictured in this article span a short period of time but represent a rather significant turning point in Bing's career. It marks his last months as a member of the Rhythm Boys trio and his emergence as a full-fledged solo artist and hit-maker. Bing re-recorded all three of his Arnheim orchestra hits for Decca in 1939, and the later issues I have in my collection are included here for completeness' sake. Note three little words in the title of the second version of "Three Little Words"--a touch of music publisher humor.



BING AND HIS CARS

Listen to Bing...



Tune in the golf show of the year . . . Bing Crosby's National Pro-Amateur . . . brought to you by Oldsmobile live from Pebble Beach, California—on ABC-TV this Sunday, January 18.

Tune in the "Zorro" show, every week on ABC-TV. See "Sparky", AC's famous horse plugging for better performance from your car.



WHEN YOU REPLACE SPARK PLUGS...★

ASK FOR AC...USED ON MORE

NEW CARS THAN ANY OTHER BRAND!

★ To maintain top performance, we recommend Spark Plug replacement at least every 10,000 miles.

AC SPARK PLUG ⚙ THE ELECTRONICS DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS



Courtesy of Greg Van Beek

We're sorry that this issue is late, but we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the beautiful Christmas cards. We hope you had a very happy holiday!

—Mark and Wayne



What did Crosby think of his singing? "It's not difficult to imitate me, because most people who've ever sung in a kitchen quartet or in a shower bath sing like me." Not exactly. "He took the superb vocal equipment with which he was blessed — a light, resonant, naturally warm, mellow,

and very masculine-sounding baritone — and developed an instinctive, jazz-influenced way of using it," wrote musicologists Roy Hemming and David Hadju. American pop-singing, once stiff and formal, operetta-like, was never the same after Crosby's intimate, into-the-microphone phrasing, stretching vowels, popping consonants, personalizing every lyric. Without Crosby's gentlemanly, relaxed vocal revolution, would there have been an Ella Fitzgerald, a Mel Tormé, a Tony Bennett, even a Sinatra?

His on- and off-screen pal, Bob Hope, stopped a lifetime of Crosby put-down jokes for this heartfelt tribute: "Bing is the greatest singer of popular songs who ever lived. This is not just my opinion. Ask anybody."

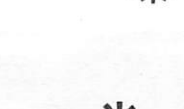
All the time he was recording, however, Crosby downplayed his monumental musical career. He'd much rather talk about his golf game or head off to the racetrack. In private, his pleasure was plotting shrewd investments, from Florida frozen-orange juice to oil wells to a partial ownership of the Pittsburgh Pirates. These endeavors made him a multimillionaire.

There was a rare time when Crosby got his hackles up about his art, fighting (unsuccessfully) against calling one of his movies *Mr. Music* (1950; December 25). "That *Mr. Music* title took in too much territory for anybody," Crosby said, "especially me, since I know relatively little about music."

Crosby was as equally light, even dismissive, of his fabulous film career, as if it were all a lucky break. Although he was a constant on the Hollywood screen — as a celebrated, much-employed Paramount Pictures contract player in the 1930s, as an Oscar-winning film superstar in the 1940s and 1950s — he belittled his celluloid presence and his talents.

"I'm certainly not a handsome fellow," Crosby shrugged, contemplating his leading-man success. "I have no glamour, no Continental suavity, no bedroom eyes." He had little to say about being America's number-one box-office star for nine years in a row in the 1940s, except that he was someone average Americans could identify with. "They figure I'm just one of those guys they run into every day at the pool room, or at the ball game, or at the office, or on the golf course."

Crosby had come a long way from being an under-achieving college kid from Tacoma, Washington, who



ABOVE:
HOLDING
THE
FIRST
GOLD
RECORD
FOR
WHITE
CHRISTMAS

TOP:
AS FATHER
O'MALLEY
IN *GOING
MY WAY*



took the road to Hollywood because it seemed easier than being a lawyer. "I started out with no other aim than the vague, general one of wanting to sing and be in show business," Crosby said. "I've been very lucky."

Crosby called himself a "light comedian," an apt term to describe his two-guys-over-a-dame verbal joustings with Bob Hope in a host of *Road to* movies and with Fred Astaire in a couple of first-rate musicals, *Blue Skies* (1946; December 25) and *Holiday Inn*. Certainly, he's amusing, easygoing company chasing after Coleen Gray in *Riding High* (1952; December 25), Jane Wyman in *Just for You* (1952; December 7, 24, 25), and Nicole Mauray in *High Time*, and satirizing himself in *Mr. Music*, playing a hit songwriter who would rather hit golf balls than compose. Who isn't charmed by Crosby as Mark Twain's laid-back space traveler in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949; December 24), conducting a sixth-century orchestra and ensnaring Sir Lancelot in his cowboy lariat?

Finally, there's Bing Crosby, the earnest, dead-serious, dramatic actor. He began at the top, with a mighty challenge, to play a parish priest, Father O'Malley, in Leo McCarey's *Going My Way* (1944; December 24, 25). Sure, he got to sing some wonderful songs, including "Too Ra Loo-Ra-Loo-Ra" and "Silent Night," but it was Crosby's humble, gentle performance that was most striking — so honest, without a trace of artifice anywhere. Later, in *Little Boy Lost* (1953; December 4, 24, 25), even the songs were set aside, as Crosby thrust himself completely into his role as a journalist searching for his lost child in post-World War II France.

Crosby won a Best Actor Oscar for *Going My Way*, was a Best Actor nominee for its sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), and then came so very close to capturing another Oscar for his striking performance as an alcoholic singer attempting a stage comeback in *The Country Girl* (1954). When the winner was announced at the 1955 Academy Awards, Crosby turned around in his seat and graciously shook the hand of the young actor who narrowly bested him: Marlon Brando for *On the Waterfront*.

During Crosby's mature years, America's finest film critics raved about him. "I believe him to be the first artist in popular expression today," wrote *The Nation's* Otis Ferguson, and *Time's* James Agee said, "I would enjoy Crosby even if he did nothing but walk across a shot." The *New York Times's* chief critic, Bosley Crowther, had a two-decade love affair in print with Crosby, whom he considered "one of the steadiest joys of the screen."

In 1977, while playing golf — his beloved sport — Bing Crosby suffered a heart attack. He died leaving behind a fortune estimated between 200- and 400-million dollars, a lifetime of talent preserved on film, radio, TV and records, and countless memories of Christmases past. ♦





A SINGULAR VOICE

American Movie Classics Magazine December 1994

BING CROSBY'S STYLE CHANGED THE SOUND OF POPULAR MUSIC FOREVER

BY GERALD PEARY

As with most things Bing, the song sneaks up on you. Against the backdrop of a Yuletide fire in the hearth, a decorated fir tree and a sweet-natured blonde (Marjorie Reynolds), Bing Crosby sits down matter-of-factly at the piano and says, "I promised I'd sing this at the inn tonight." The movie is *Holiday Inn* (1942; December 24, 25), and he croons two simple stanzas, words and music by Irving Berlin, composed specially for the film. "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas..." Bing begins. ❄️ Because there are no bridges and no chorus, Bing has Reynolds refrain the stanzas while he spoon-feeds her the words: "Just like the ones I used to know...." On the line about hearing "sleigh bells in the snow," he runs his pipe across bells hanging in the tree for a tinkling sound effect. At the wish, "May all your Christmases be bright," *Holiday Inn* cuts to an extreme long shot and a fade out.

The rest, undeniably, is music history. "White Christmas," as sung so feelingly by Bing Crosby, leapt out of *Holiday Inn* and into the hearts of celebrants around the world, those yearning each year for an idyllic, snow-covered December 25th. Conservative sources say 30 million records of Crosby's "White Christmas" have sold in the last half-century; others count up to 35 and 40 million.

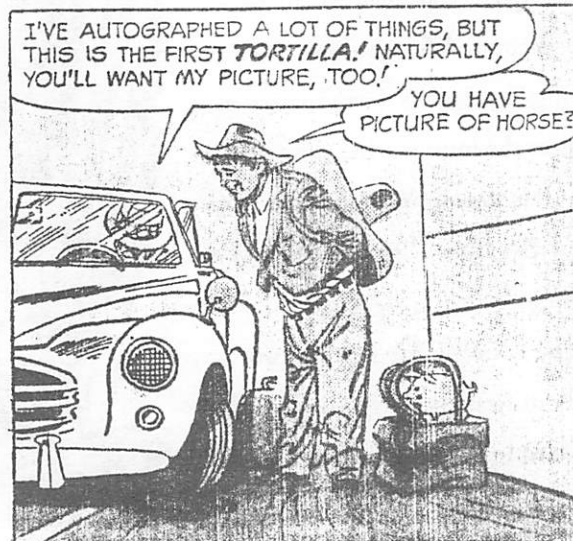
What did Crosby say? "It's a great song with a simple melody and nowadays anywhere I go I have to sing it. It's as much a part of me as 'When the Blue of the Night' or my floppy ears." Typically, Crosby sounded a modest note about his success. But Crosby's way with a melody was more than luck, for so many songs were good to him. "White Christmas" won an Oscar for best song, but so did three other of his tunes,

"Swinging on a Star" from *Going My Way* (1944; December 24, 25), "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" from *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) and "The Second Time Around" from *High Time* (1960; December 14, 25). In all, 14 Crosby songs were Oscar-nominated.

"White Christmas" is by far the best-selling single of all time. Yet it's only one of 2,500 songs recorded by Crosby in the most extraordinarily prolific of careers, from trios with Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys in the late 1920s through 10 LP's recorded between 1975 and 1977, when he was already in his 70s. Nobody has sold more records. Not The Beatles. Not Michael Jackson. Nobody.



ONE WEEK LATER — IN HOLLYWOOD...



Bing Crosby-Master of Disguise

In the 1961 comic book version of the movie "Pepe," Bing's face has been disguised with drawn-on glasses and a moustache. I speculate this was done either to avoid paying Bing a royalty or to protect the surprise of his appearance in the film. In any case, it's too bad the publishers had to make this choice and alter a nice Crosby collectible.

M.S.



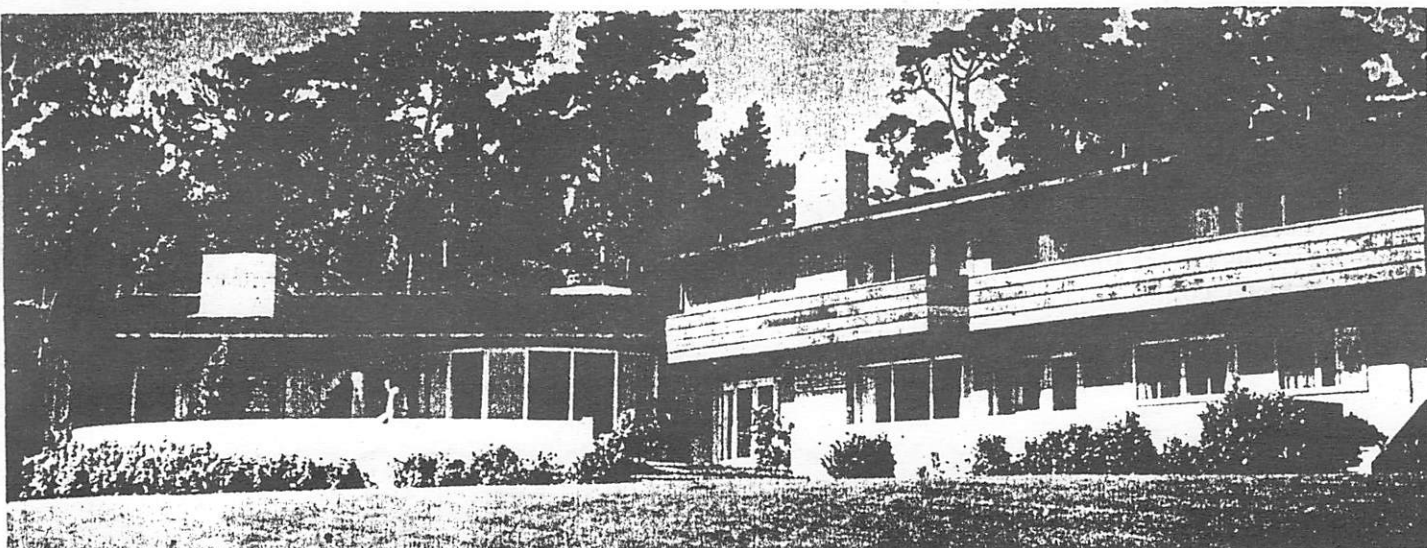
NO. 1194

PEPE

The hilarious
adventures of a
lovable clown
and a
prize-winning
stallion!



© 1961, COLUMBIA PICTURES CORPORATION



Fir and oak trees frame 14-room home which has windows galore, long sun-deck on 2nd floor.

PEBBLE BEACH; Calif.

IT WAS A SAD DAY here. The house that songs built was up for sale.

Bing Crosby's beautiful 14-room home went on the market recently. After the death of Dixie Crosby, Bing decided to sell the great home so close to his heart.

It stands on 2 acres, cost \$250,000 to build. The asking price was \$200,000.

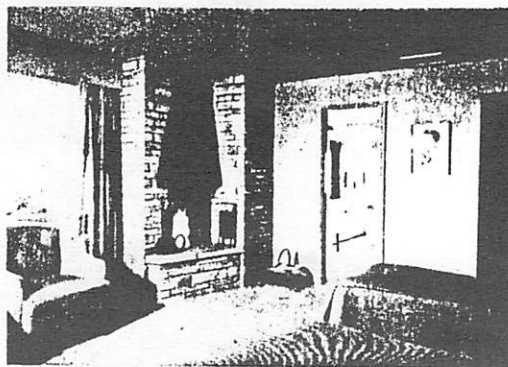
Want to take a tour through it? First, park in the circular court near the blazing begonias. Step through the massive front door into the cork-floored hall.

On your right is a beige and cream living room with great curved windows overlooking the ocean. Beyond is the den with hundreds of books, photographs, 50 trophies including an Oscar ("Going my Way?").

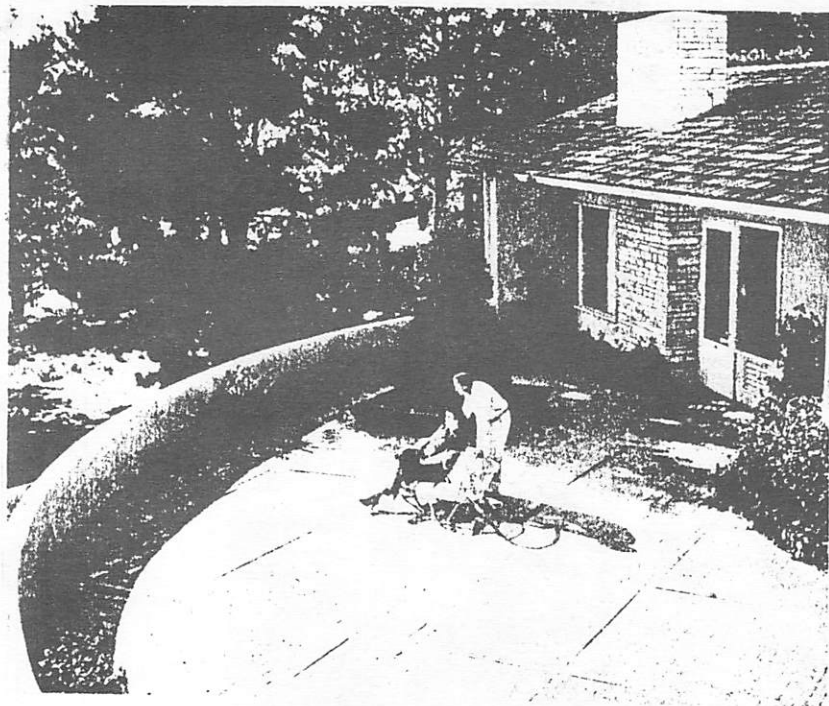
There's cork flooring, too, in the cream and coral dining room and every convenience down to a big chopping block in the green-and-brown all electric kitchen.

The house is wired for music—you can turn it on in any room.

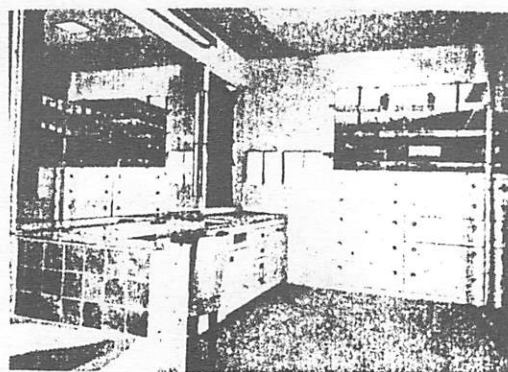
As for Bing—he still has a house in Hollywood and a ranch in Nevada.



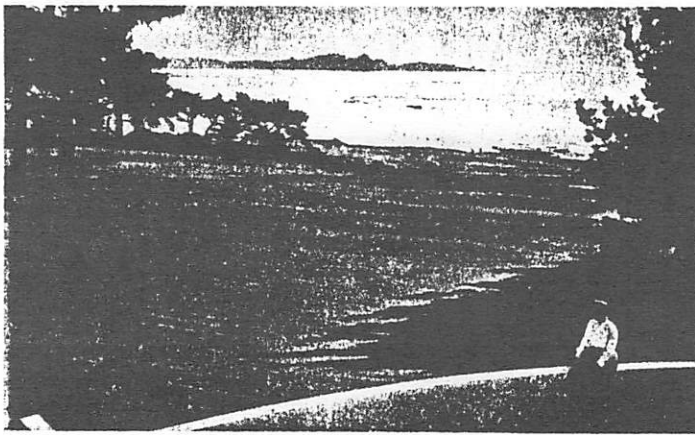
CORNER fireplace is cheerful addition to the master bedroom. Room overlooks the ocean. As many as 18 can sleep in the 14-room home.



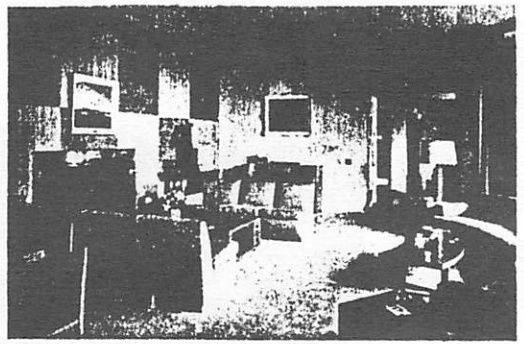
BRICK-PAVED main patio overlooks bay, is handsomely ornamented with a variety of shrubs, flowers. Here Bing's sister, Mrs. Mary Rose Pool, and her husband, James Pool, relax and look out to the Pacific Ocean beyond.



LADIES' dressing room adjoining master bedroom is soft pink and beige shades. Spacious and mirror-lined, it has great drawer space.



BEAUTIFUL Monterey Bay stretches out in front of the Crosby home at Pebble Beach. Around it is the famous golf course where Bing and other celebrities take part in frequent tournaments.

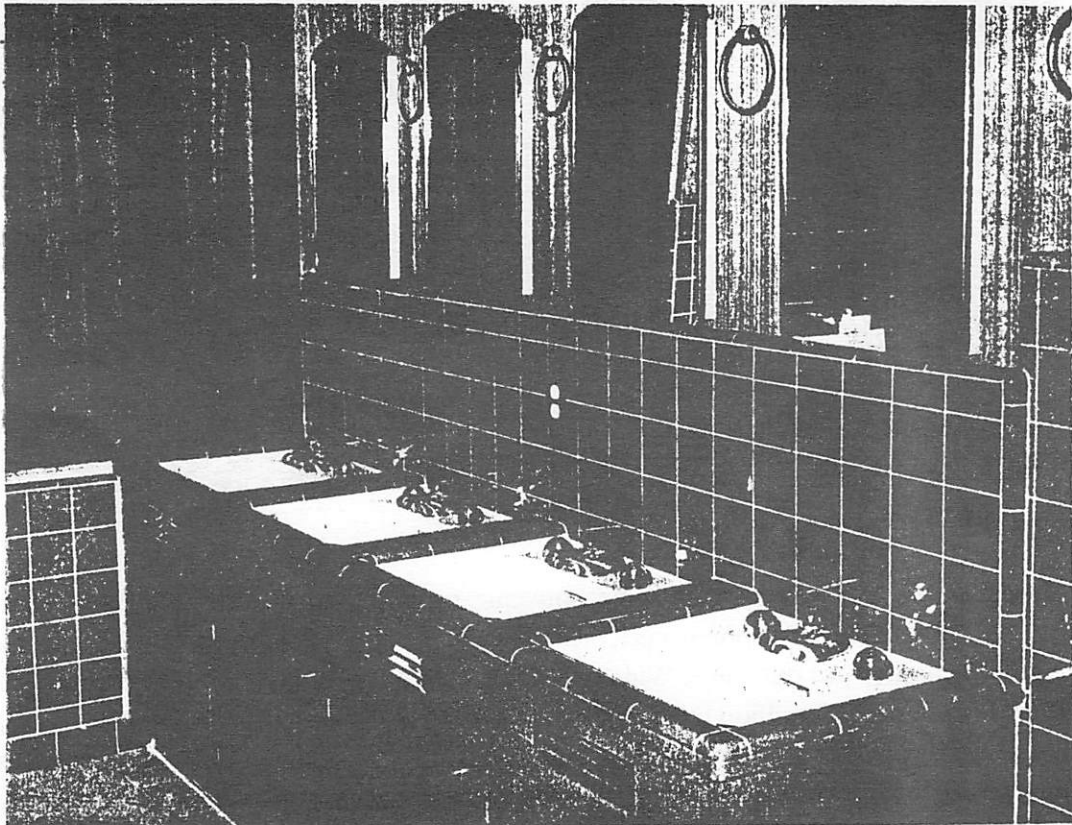


LIVING ROOM: in cream and beige, has comfortable modern furniture. Projection booth for home movie showing is just behind piano.

This article is the fifth in Caroline Dawson's series on Bing's residences. It is from the December 13, 1953 issue of *Parade Magazine* and shows Bing's Pebble Beach home when it was offered for sale a year after Dixie's death.

Crosby's House Goes Up for Sale

His huge home at Pebble Beach cost \$250,000 to build



ONE BATHROOM has four washbasins, one each for Phillip, Dennis, Lindsay and Gary Crosby. Both the boys' and Bing's bath-dress-

ing rooms are done in cocoa-color. Wardrobe closets line one entire wall, contained Bing's famous collection of colorful sports clothes.

THE CROSBY AT BERMUDA RUN



Pictured above is the very handsome souvenir program cover from the 1994 Crosby Golf Tournament. 1995 will see this premier celebrity tournament celebrating its tenth year at the picturesque Bermuda Run course just outside of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Since moving there in 1986, the event has raised over \$11 million for charities worldwide, and the tournament continues to get bigger and better every year. Shelby Webb of *The Crosby* office informs us that the tournament has established its dates through 1997 for those wishing to make travel or vacation plans. It will be held on June 1-4, 1995, May 30-June 2, 1996, and on May 29-June 1, 1997. So, make arrangements now to be there. It's an experience you'll never forget. For more information, please write or call *The Crosby At Bermuda Run*, P. O. Box 2512, Winston-Salem, NC 27102-2512, phone (910) 519-7500.



NOT LONG AGO, a news item from Los Angeles noted an old landmark, the Ambassador Hotel, had been sold and would probably be torn down.

I caught my breath, and my mind carried me back to the 1930s. I'll never forget one very special visit I made to that hotel and its posh club, the Coconut Grove.

I was thrilled to my toes on the day Mama announced that, in honor of my graduation from high school, she was taking me and my sisters, Inez and Freda, to "the Grove" for a Saturday afternoon tea dance!

The Grove, which featured the day's most popular orchestras and entertainers, was a famous rendezvous for national and international dignitaries, society folk, film stars and social climbers. And it was expensive.

Entering the glamorous room with Mama and my sisters on that special Saturday was like walking into a fantasy. Flowing chiffon dresses, hats and white gloves were all part of the '30s style, and we saw it all in this fabulous place!

Well-lit and spacious, the Grove had half-circled tiers facing the dance floor and bandstand. Silken pastel drapes enhanced the luxurious decor, and tables sparkled with crystal goblets and fresh flowers. White-gloved waiters wheeled about ornate tea carts of pastries and miniature sandwiches deftly arranged on silver trays.

Stars by Daylight

Gus Arnheim's band was featured that day. The name means nothing now, but back then those musicians were famous! The star performers, who'd been heralded for weeks, were the Rhythm Boys and Bing Crosby.

Bing was just beginning to create a furor among young women at that time. Labeled "the crooner", he'd introduced a completely new style of singing.

I pinched myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. Imag-

Graduate's Gift Was 'the Grove'



For a wide-eyed high school girl, an afternoon tea dance at the swank Coconut Grove was like stepping into fantasyland.

By Georgie Brooks, San Lorenzo, California

ine! The Coconut Grove and Bing Crosby all in one day!

Dancing would have been wonderful, too. For unescorted women, the Grove even provided professional dancing partners who were oh, so courteous and proper.

However, Freda leaned over and warned, "If one of those men asks you to dance, say 'No thank you'."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because Mama will have to pay him, and it's expensive...that's why!"

I didn't care. I was content to just sit and absorb the sights and sounds around me.

When a man did approach our table, I was quite prepared to politely refuse...but he bowed to Mama instead, who smiled and shook her head. It seemed that the older women were favored because they had money.

Desserts Were Delectable

When the tea cart of pastries passed our table, I was bug-eyed with delight. I chose the largest, creamiest creation displayed. As I savored every luscious bite, Bing Crosby and the Rhythm Boys performed my favorite pop tunes of the day.

I sighed to myself, *If I die right now, it's okay—I've been to the Grove!*

But there was more. Perhaps the most memorable part of my afternoon at the Grove was the unexpected appearance of a small dark-haired girl about 10 years old.

After trying to adjust the microphone for her, Gus Arnheim finally just stood her up on a chair facing the audience. "I'm sure you'll all love this little lady and remember her name," he announced. "Meet Frances Gumm!"

I stood to get a better look. The girl was tiny but not at all shy—she belted out her song like a true professional. The audience gave her a standing ovation.

Years later, this talented young singer became known as Judy Garland. I'd seen it all at the Grove!

Bing Crosby's Fans--Continued

Only Elvis and country great Williams have had a full sheet of stamps all to themselves, said U.S. Postal Service officials. Williams also shared a sheet with other country stars.

Fans of Crosby from Spokane, including Kathy Hamilton of the postal service, have been waiting for years for a stamp to honor their most famous native son.

"I grew up hearing stories about Bing. I lived down the block from the house he bought for his parents," said Hamilton, Spokane's post office customer relations coordinator. "So, yeah, I'd like to have seen him get his own stamp."

The stamp issue has been the hot topic among the Crosby crowd for the past few months, said Wayne Martin, vice president of Club Crosby, which has 350 members in the U.S. and Canada [and overseas].

"We've had 50 letters sent to our newsletter from people unhappy about this," said Martin, who edits ["Bingang"] from his office in St. Louis.

Postal officials said their treatment of Crosby does not mean they see Elvis as bigger or better than Crosby.

"You can't compare Elvis and Bing," said U.S. Postal

Service spokeswoman Robin Minard. "Elvis was a phenomenon" and has an appeal among stamp collectors that few people have.

Collectors have bought about \$36 million worth of Elvis stamps in the two years that his solo stamp has been available.

The next closest in revenue is the 1969 stamp issued the day Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. It generated \$24 million.

Minard said postal service officials, looking at how much money a new stamp can raise, decide who deserves solo status and who does not.

Crosby fans should realize "it's still an honor" being picked for the series of five new stamps.

The postal service selects about 35 new stamp sheets per year, with hundreds of worthy people never reaching stamp-fame.

"And I'm sure," Frank Thomas, a postal service marketing specialist added, "there's a group of Ethel Merman fans out there today who are saying, 'Why can't she have a stamp all to herself? She deserves it.'"

From *Spokesman Review*, Sept. 1, 1994. Article courtesy of Gonzaga University Library. Type has been reset, and corrections are in brackets.

And In New York City. . . .

Jim Brockson, treasurer of the International Al Jolson Society, sent us this picture from the New York stamp dedication ceremony. Pictured flanking the stamp of Bing Crosby are Bing's son Harry and Postmaster General Marvin Runyon. Jim wrote that the song selected for Bing was "Swinging On A Star."

Member Barbara Fisher was in attendance and sent us a large color photo which now hangs proudly in the *Bingang* office.

The ceremony was held in the open-air theater in Damrosch Park located at Lincoln Center, West 62nd St. and Amsterdam Ave., Manhattan.





JEANNE MILLET/ BULLETIN

New York City and Spokane were the only two national cities to have Bing Crosby's stamp unveiled to the public.

Legendary crooner: Campus contributions a reminder of singer's generosity

by PAMELA WILSON
Features Editor

As with any institution, Gonzaga holds claim to many famous alumni. The Utah Jazz's John Stockton is one example, as is someone who resided here long ago—Bing Crosby.

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby was born in 1903 in Tacoma, Wash. His parents moved to Spokane in 1906, where he later attended Gonzaga High School and Gonzaga University from 1920-24.

Although he left the school before graduation to pursue a career in show business, he maintained ties with the university. When Gonzaga needed a library, the school approached him for assistance in the funding of its construction.

Crosby contributed by organizing a television show—"The Bing Crosby Edsel Show"—featuring Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney and Crosby. The show, which garnered an Emmy Award, generated enough funds to aid in the construction.

The Crosby Library still stands at the center of campus, where Crosby himself broke ground to initiate its

construction. After the Foley Center was built in 1992, the Crosby Library was converted into the Crosby Student Center.

Gonzaga is proud to hold the largest public collection of Crosby memorabilia. The Crosby Student Center houses the Crosbyana Room, a collection of gold and platinum albums, photographs, books, trophies, an Oscar and other awards he received.

The home he grew up in, located at E. 508 Sharp, stands at the entrance to Gonzaga. It now houses the Gonzaga Alumni Association. Photos of Crosby are also on display in the Administration Building.

Souvenirs such as coasters, coffee mugs and other items are available for purchase at the Crosbyana Room in the Student Center weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Article from *Gonzaga Bulletin*, Sept. 9, 1994, courtesy of Gonzaga University Library. Type has been reset without editorial changes.

Bing Crosby's Fans Wanted Stamp Of Their Own

By Tom Sowa
Staff Writer

Elvis Presley had his own. Hank Williams, ditto. So fans of the late Bing Crosby wish he'd get his own solo-stamp spotlight from the U.S. Postal Service.

Crosby's followers around the globe are singing a sour note during the U.S. Postal Services's official release of a new 29-cent stamp honoring their man.

They're happy he's getting his due.

They're not happy that their all-time favorite entertainer must share the sheet of stamps with four other American popular stars.

Crosby's commemorative stamp formally debuts at 11 a.m. today at Spokane's Gonzaga University—the school he attended before starting his singing career.

His fans insist that Crosby was the first pop superstar and deserves treatment equal to Elvis, who is the king of stamp sales as well as rock'n'roll.

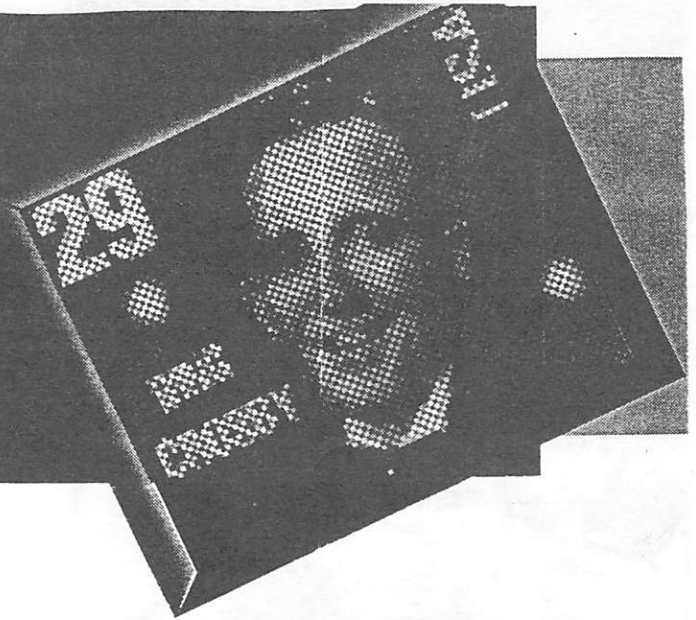
Bill Hunt, president of the Connecticut Crosby Circle, one of [four] clubs in the country preserving the legend of the entertainer, called today a mixed blessing.

"It's good Bing's given a stamp at last," Hunt said. "But he was more than a singer. He excelled in radio, recordings and movies, and stayed on top for many years."

Today's new sheet of stamps is part of a series which also features singers Nat King Cole, Al Jolson, Ethel Merman and Ethel Waters.

(Cont'd)

A TRIBUTE TO BING



by JEANINE GERMON
Bulletin Staff Writer

More than 350 stamp collectors, fans and observers gathered outside the Crosby Student Center Sept. 1 to honor Gonzaga alumnus Bing Crosby with the unveiling of the new Bing Crosby stamp.

Sept. 1 marked the beginning of the American Music & Stamp Festival Month. Both New York City and Spokane kicked off the festival by commissioning The Popular Singers StampFolio featuring Bing Crosby, Nat "King" Cole, Al Jolson, Ethel Merman and Ethel Waters.

The Crosby Center was chosen as the site of the stamp's dedication due to his family ties to the city of Spokane. The Crosby Student Center, formerly the Crosby Library before the construction of the Foley Center in 1992, was built with his contribution in 1957.

"The Bing Crosby stamp is part of a commemorative stamp program that provides a portrait gallery of America," said Robert Reisner, vice president of the U.S. Postal Service Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Crosby's grandson, Bing "Flip" Crosby of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, was also present at the ceremony to thank the postal service and the crowd for honoring his grandfather.

"Grandpa always played your average guy in his films, and that's the way he was in real life," said the 28-year old Crosby. "He wasn't really a Hollywood guy, and that's why he liked returning to the Northwest so much."

Gonzaga's president, the Rev. Bernard J. Coughlin, S.J., said the Crosby Student Center was an appropriate place to introduce the stampfolio because of the university's "long and loving association" with Crosby.

Coughlin met Crosby when he first came to Gonzaga in 1974. During the ceremony, Coughlin recalled strolling across the campus with Crosby as he reminisced about his childhood.

"On this grass we used to play football on the rocks," Crosby told Coughlin as they walked across Gonzaga's quad.

Dr. Ed Fitzgerald, a long-time friend of Crosby Sr. and an alumnus of the class of 1926 shared some happy memories with the crowd. For 15 consecutive years, Fitzgerald recalled receiving gifts from Crosby.

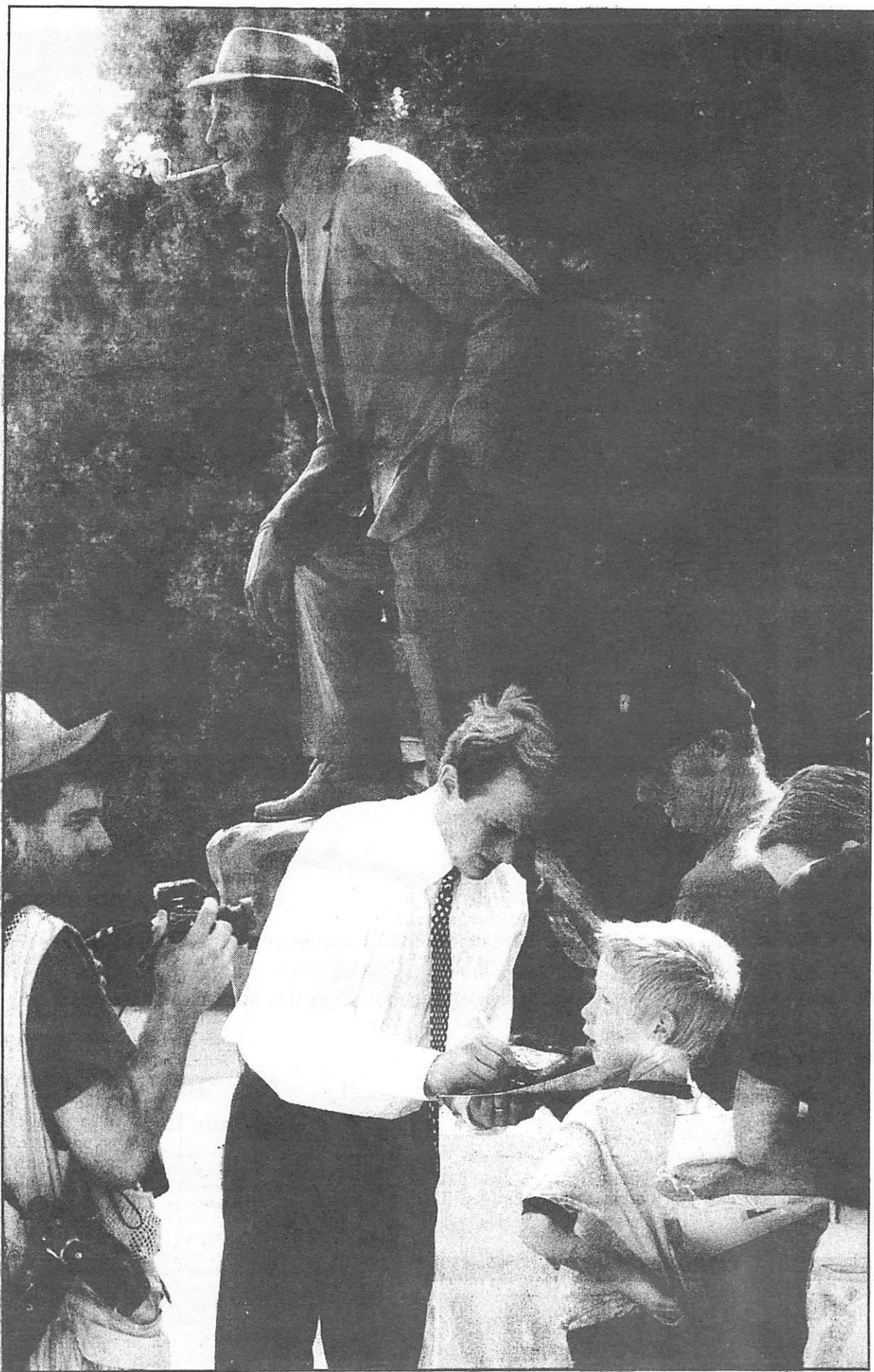
Spokane Postmaster Kenneth Symbol Jr. presented stampfolios to Flip Crosby, friends of Bing Crosby, Coughlin and Gonzaga Special Collections Librarian Stephanie Edwards. Edwards works with Gonzaga's Bing Crosby collection, the largest collection of Crosby memorabilia in the world.

The ceremony continued with the signing of autographs by Flip Crosby, selling of the stamps and a tour of the Crosbyana Room in the student center.

Bing Crosby, who died of a heart attack while golfing in 1977, was born in Tacoma, Wash. He grew up in Spokane after his family moved in 1906. He attended Gonzaga University and abandoned his law studies in 1925 to try his luck in Hollywood. One of Gonzaga's most famous alumni, Crosby won an Academy Award in 1944 for his performance of a singing priest in the film *Going My Way*. He is best known for singing "White Christmas" in the 1942 film *Holiday Inn*.

Article from *Gonzaga Bulletin*, Sept. 9, 1994, courtesy of Gonzaga University Library. Type has been reset without editorial changes.





Shawn Jacobson/The Spokesman-Review

SIGNING FOR BING. Bing "Flip" Crosby signs autographs under a statue of his grandfather, Bing Crosby, at Gonzaga University on Thursday following a ceremony featuring the first issue of the singer's stamps.

(Courtesy of Don Eagle)

♪ JUNIOR JUKE WOWS THE KIDS! ♪

Lights up and changes colors
as it plays records



PROJECT OF

Bing Crosby
RESEARCH FOUNDATION



Fun to hear, naturally . . .
and fun to WATCH, too!
Its colored lights win a
flurry of attention from
everyone. The soft red
glow changes as the yellow
light flashes on and off!

A New "Junior Juke"
Electronic Record Player

\$29.95
\$3.00 Down

Stuffed in the back of member Bill Hunt's recently acquired Bing Crosby Junior Juke was an unexpected bonus—the entire 1948 Sears Christmas Catalog which offered this very same jukebox. Unfortunately, Bill wasn't able to talk the shop owner into selling it to him for the 1948 price, although Lord knows he tried.

M.S.

*Children's Phonographs,
And Musical Toys*

"... something with dearest tone.
A handsome, shining, entertaining,
fine new graphophone"



New "Junior Juke" Electronic Record Player

A It's a red-letter Christmas indeed for youngsters who get a "Junior Juke." Whether they belong to the lollipop gang or the soda-pop set, they'll thrill at owning this record player modeled after the familiar drug store juke-box . . . especially since it bears Bing Crosby's name! Grown-ups, too, will like it for gay parties the year around. Its tone reproduction is amazingly clear, rich and pleasing. Take note of these features:

- Lights up and changes color as it plays! Sturdy metal case
- Front and grillwork molded of colorful plastic
- 2 tubes; amplifier-rectifier; 4-inch magnetic speaker
- Volume control (full range, soft to loud); off-on switch
- Sensitive, lightweight crystal pick-up cartridge in tone arm
- Plays up to 12-inch records. For 105-125 volt A.C. only

Put it in the favorite home hang-out—playroom, rumpus room, nursery or wherever it is. Let the children do their own "disc-jockeying"—it's easy to operate. Approved by Underwriters' Lab., Inc. Size 13x14x16 in. high. Records not included—see below, and index.

79 N 02402—Needle included. Shipping weight 17 pounds. . . . Cash \$29.95

"As far as people were concerned, I was just the girl who was with him. Was I good enough for him? Probably not."

Every woman loved him, she says, and with his constant golfing, fishing and hunting, which kept him away from the house "52 percent of the time," he was a man's man, too. Her secret in keeping "the magic alive" was to make him pursue her again and again. "I think Bing liked me. I was reasonably strong. I was Eliza Doolittle finally standing on her own two feet."

The book suggests he had a roving eye, with a special weakness for French governesses for their three children.

He spoke French? "He spoke bedroom French," she says drily.

There is a suggestion of a dalliance with Grace Kelly after the shooting of *The Country Girl*. Later, after Bing and Kathryn were married, they had a barbecue with the Rainiers in Monaco. Bing seemed to be all over the princess, and there stood Kathryn in the formal gown she'd been advised to wear while Grace, flipping hamburgers, wore grease-splattered trousers. "That was deliberate," Mrs. Crosby says with vindictive decision.

"Grace was a good girl, she was a lady," she reflects. "And she was five-foot-eight. Bing wouldn't marry a girl that tall. He was only five-nine. He was absolutely constant. Never mind what I say in the book," she says with a laugh.

It wasn't what you could call "a comfortable marriage," she writes. But after he died, she discovered he'd kept every letter she'd ever sent him, even her first thank-you note from the first date.

Did he sing to her? "All the time. And his singing voice and his speaking voice were the same."

Everyone wanted to know what he was really like, Mrs. Crosby says. "Journalists asked one another, 'How cold did you think he was? How much of a drunk did you think he was? How cruel did you think he was to the four children of his first marriage?'"

"They all assumed. When I started this book, I was going from the position that everybody loved him. You could even see (his son) Gary sober up in front of his dad. He was vulnerable, which made everybody love him." Hollywood, she says, was too painful for him; he couldn't stand people who were in awe of him.

As mentioned, she is working on a sequel of her last 12 years of marriage to Crosby and is now into year six. Did she dread writing it, knowing the sad ending, with Crosby dying on a Spanish golf course in 1977?

"I was so grateful that he could still play 18 holes and win \$10 from his friends. One of them asked if he was tired. He said, 'No, it's not hilly.' And he dropped quite dead. I saw his forehead. It was grazed. So he fell dead and hadn't suffered."

Article is from the *Vancouver Sun*, September 24, 1994. Type has been reset, and the article has been edited, primarily for space reasons, but we also thought you probably wouldn't want to read Michael Brooks' inane comments again. Courtesy of Ray and Audrey Steele, Surrey, B.C., Canada.



Newlyweds Bing and Kathryn on their honeymoon in Palm Springs, October 1957.

just gotten finished writing the liner notes to MCA's upcoming retrospective set on the Andrews Sisters, which includes some of their duets with Bing, and MCA plans a complete duets album in the next year. Bing's movies turn up on video, and maybe the resolution of the Paramount takeover will speed that process. And of course Gary Giddins' book will be out in the fall of 1995, hopefully to set the record straight on a lot of things. As for me, those of you who read my article know that it gave only a brief account of Bing's later years. That's right, I was running out of room. I hope to do an article that goes into detail on the period from the mid-1950s to Bing's death, and I may be looking for some research help from people in this room.

Fifty years ago, 1944, was the year Bing won the Academy Award for best actor. At that time, anyone could tell he was the biggest star in America. Fifty years later, that hasn't really changed. The other day I was speaking to Joel Whitburn, whom many of you know is the author of a series of reference books based on the *Billboard* magazine record charts. We were talking about the entertainment business over the course of the 20th Century, and he said something I thought was important enough to write down and repeat to you. He said, "When you look back at it, the whole century of music, Bing Crosby definitely is the #1 entertainment star of the hundred years." I don't think I'll get any argument with that statement here, but I thought you'd like to hear it.

Thank you.



Bing There, Done That-- With Crosby

LLOYD DYKK
VANCOUVER SUN

KATHRYN CROSBY, the second wife and widow of Bing, is in town doing a little reading—aloud, into a tape recorder.

The book is her own, a year-by-year chronicle, published in 1983, called *My Life With Bing*, which covers the first eight years of her 20-year marriage to Bing Crosby, plus the five initial ones it took to land him. The "audiobook" is a project of the provincial government's library services branch, which records books for the visually impaired. Plans were to have her record her book in a studio in Nevada, where she now lives, but her terms were that she do it here or not at all. (For as long as she knew him, Crosby annually came to B.C. to fish.)

"I want you to say what a valuable service this is," says the imperious five-foot-four woman, almost straight off, entertaining the boardroom as three provincial functionaries of the book-taping program feel free to sit in on the interview.

"A lot of my friends are blind. Bob Hope can hardly see, and he's very, very dear to me. I use audiobooks myself. When I get my migraines I'm practically blind for days."

She has been reading since yesterday and will do a lot more before hitting 1965, where the book breaks off (she's writing a sequel). How's it coming? "I got married," she sighs. "It's 1958."

It's a little daunting talking to a link with the famous crooner whose suave art deco baritone carved out the pop romantic landscape of at least two decades and

whom even wartime enemies affectionately termed "Der Bingle." She's known to be a little daunting herself—"a powerful personality with a whim of iron," as Bob Hope has described her. "To me, Bing wasn't a star," she says. "He was the man who called me Tex." We note she doesn't seem to have an accent. "Ahm not mad at you," she drawls slyly.

In 1953 Olive Kathryn Grandstaff (later Kathryn Grant), from West Columbia, Texas, was on the Paramount lot as a bit player. In those days she was star-struck, bumping into Crosby who was shooting *White Christmas*. He noticed her, and she noticed that he noticed. His first words were, "Hi Tex, what's your hurry?" She remembers prattling on nervously about horses, and asked who was that baseball team in the picture on his wall (The Pittsburgh Pirates—he owned them). He suggested having tea some time. He was 50, she was 19. It was love—eventually.

It took five years and several stormy separations, however, before the elusive Crosby married her. In her sometimes candid and often witheringly savvy memoir, Mrs. Crosby mentions the reliability of her actressy tears and her "melting magnolia blossom" act. She must have been formidable. The marriage lasted, even though Crosby, who considered a woman's place to be in the home, discouraged her nursing studies (she eventually graduated, nursing the failing Crosby at home) and her own acting career (she has no illusions that *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* will end up in many pantheons).

She rarely felt comfortable in Crosby's circle in Hollywood or in Europe—she was the daughter of a Texas schoolmarm.



Gonzaga University is pleased to offer the following gift and souvenir items in recognition of its Bing Crosby Collection.

MUG SET WITH COFFEE. Four royal blue ceramic mugs with the Bing Crosby Collection logo and a 1# bag of "Bing's Blend" premium roasted coffee. \$30.00.

MUG SET. The same set of four royal blue ceramic mugs as above, without the coffee. \$23.00.

Ceramic mugs sold separately at \$6.00 each.

GLASS BEVERAGE SET WITH COFFEE. Four clear glass mugs with the Bing Crosby logo and a 1# bag of "Bing's Blend" premium roasted coffee. \$37.00.

GLASS BEVERAGE SET. The same set of four clear glass mugs with the Bing Crosby logo, without the coffee. \$30.00.

*Clear glass mugs sold separately at \$8.00 each.
All mugs are dishwasher proof and microwavable.*

"Bing's Blend" premium roasted coffee available in 1# bags for \$7.95 and 1/2# bags for \$4.50.

GOLD RECORD COASTER. A ceramic "gold record" of Bing's "White Christmas," suitable for hot or cold drinks, as well as display. \$12.00.

GOLF OR BASEBALL CAP. In a high quality royal blue fabric, this cap carries the Bing Crosby logo in front. Adjustable sizing. \$10.00.

Order from:
Director of Marketing
AD Box 100
Gonzaga University
Spokane, WA 99258-0001

Shipping and delivery: Add 5% to total dollar order. Washington residents add 8% sales tax. Questions: call (509) 328-4220, Ext. 6371. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Memorial To Ken Twiss



A Memorial Service for Ken Twiss, the founder and president of the Bing Crosby Historical Society, was held on June 5, 1994, in the Bing Crosby Rose Garden at Tacoma's Port Defiance Park.

To commemorate Ken, contributions were recently received from former B.C.H.S. members and friends that enabled a special bench to be built with a marker. This bench was placed at the site of the Rose Garden.

The marker reads: "Ken Twiss, 1911-1993, whose efforts made this Bing Crosby Rose Garden a living reality. Ken's vision in founding the Bing Crosby Historical Society in 1977, and his leadership through 1993 will long be remembered."

The memorial was conducted at this site, starting at 12 noon and was attended by quite a few of Ken's friends and B.C.H.S. members.

Dwight Correll, a very close friend of Ken, began the service by telling about his association with Ken over the years. Jo Heiman, a board member, read excerpts of letters from various B.C.H.S. members telling of their associations and friendships with Ken. Many of the remarks were most touching. Former president Caroline Gallacci and officer Arleigh Jones spoke of working closely with him. Board members Roy Starks and Bill Osborn also contributed various anecdotes concerning their friendships with Mr. Twiss. Board member Vern Taylor traveled from Portland, Oregon to attend the memorial and also talked briefly of his long friendship with Ken.

The event was held outdoors. The weather was warm but completely overcast. Rain was forecast, but luckily it held off until approximately one hour after the completion of the memorial. By that time most of the group attending was safely under cover enjoying a lunch at the Port Defiance Boathouse Grill Restaurant.

—BILL OSBORN, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



Bing Crosby Duets

By David Lobosco

With the success of Frank Sinatra's "Duets" album last year, I thought it would be interesting to profile some of Bing's great singing partners. Actress Jane Wyman once said that "If you can't sing with Bing, you can't sing." How true that is! Whenever I sing along with my recordings of Bing, I think I sound like Bing Jr. Too bad my parents and the dogs in the neighborhood do not agree with me.

The earliest duet that comes to mind is Bing singing with his first wife Dixie Lee. "The Way You Look Tonight" and "A Fine Romance" were both from the Fred Astaire flick *Swingtime* (1936). The love Bing and Dixie shared was evident, especially on "The Way You Look Tonight." Hearing the married couple sing makes you feel that you are getting a look at their private lives. Unfortunately, Bing never recorded seriously with his second wife Kathryn. Like Dixie, she did not have a great voice but a pleasant one. She did sing often with Bing during his many television specials and live performances. I loved their television duet of "I Wish They'd Marry Soon." I believe it is from one of the *Hollywood Palace* shows.

A favorite pairing is Bing with the great Connee Boswell. Every recording they made was great, from "Bob White" in 1937 to "That's A-Plenty," made in 1952. It seems that Miss Boswell brought out the jazz in Bing more than any other singer could. Louis Armstrong also brought out Bing's jazz side. Bing's best album of the sixties was his disc with Armstrong, and Bing never sounded more at home than when he casually crooned "Gone Fishin'" with Satchmo. They were a great team on the screen as well. Louis appeared in *Pennies From Heaven* (1936), but he had no musical spots with Bing. They would have to wait two decades to work together on the film *High Society* (1956). Their duet of Cole Porter's "Now You Has Jazz" makes all other Porter songs pale in comparison.

From the same movie, Bing also had a good duet with his nearest competitor, Frank Sinatra. They sang "Well, Did You Evah?" and although Frank still had a voice then, he was upstaged throughout the whole song by Bing. Sinatra is a good singer, but he does not have the laidback style that Bing had. Dean Martin and Perry Como sing more like Bing than Frank Sinatra does. Unfortunately, Bing never recorded professionally with Perry Como. Maybe their styles were so alike that there was not enough contrast in their voices to make a compelling duet. They appeared in a 1961 special. It should be made available on video.

If Bing's duets with Connee Boswell were famous in

the thirties, then his stints at the mike with the Andrews Sisters were the best of the forties. Their first duet was "Ciribiribin" in 1939, and Decca Records wasted no time pairing them together 22 times during the next decade. However, as the Andrews Sisters' appeal diminished in the late forties, so did their songs with Bing. Bing and the sisters were still in great voice, but with songs like "Poppa Santa Claus" and "The Yodelin' Ghost" their popularity together diminished. When the Andrews Sisters broke up in the fifties, Patty Andrews sang with Bing on a few recordings. Nothing monumental came of it, but their recording of "Love and Learn" from Bing's dramatic outing in *The Country Girl* (1954) is enjoyable.

In recent years, Bing's son Gary has painted a picture of his father as a tyrant, but back in the fifties Bing sang with Gary on a number of recordings, and Gary held his own with the old master. Personal favorites among their duets are "Sam's Song" and "Down By The Riverside." If Gary had the drive his father had, he could have been a great star on his own.

Through the years Bing crooned with the best. Although he made four sides with Judy Garland, their best duets were on each other's radio shows. A favorite is the song with the longest title: "How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Loved You When You Know I've Been A Liar All My Life." That mouthful was intended for Fred Astaire and Judy in *Royal Wedding* (1950), but ill health forced Garland to drop out, and Jane Powell took over. Speaking of Fred Astaire, Bing and Fred made two movies together and an album in 1975, but their best outing came when they recreated the Phil Harris classic "The Thing" for Bing's radio show.

In later years, Bing's movie and recording careers were reduced, but he thrived on television, where he would be paired with such modern stars as Diana Ross, Bette Midler, The Temptations, and even British model Twiggy. Bing's best duet of his later years occurred when he appeared on Dame Vera Lynn's television show in 1975. Both were the most popular singers during World War II, and their voices blended perfectly on "Sing." It is a shame that an ocean and a thousand miles prevented them from recording together.

Bing was selfless in debuting new talent, and he worked well with every type of singer. From the jazz styles of Connee Boswell to the rock status of David Bowie, Bing sang with the best of them. When Dame Vera Lynn professed her lifelong dream of singing with Bing, he replied with "You must elevate your goals." It was everybody's dream not only to sing like Bing, but to sing with Bing as well.

Of Bananas and Crosbys

By H. Allen Smith

(Chapter 15 of his book "Life in a Putty Knife Factory")

WHEN my father was in the vicinity of twelve years old he was unreasonable about bananas. He could never get enough of them. In those days bananas were almost as rare as rotolactors and Pop's passionate yearning for them became a source of irritation to his parents.

One afternoon his father summoned him to the front yard of the Smith homestead. Hanging from a lower limb of the mulberry tree was a stalk of bananas, full and complete.

"Yonder's some bananas for you," said Caleb Smith.

The entire family, augmented by half-a-dozen neighbors, gathered in the front yard to watch Pop eat bananas. He vows to this day that he didn't move off the spot until he had consumed every one of those bananas. He has not eaten another during all of the ensuing fifty years. It nauseates him to be in the same room with a banana.

Something similar happened to me in 1941. I acquired a surfeit of Crosbys. There were times during that year when a mere whispering of the name was sufficient to send me to bed.

I mention this attack of Crosby allergy by way of preface to a short course in the art of writing for magazines. The story begins back in the summer of 1940 and has its genesis, properly enough, in a saloon.

At that time I might have been described as a warm admirer of Bing Crosby's style of singing. I attended his movies, sometimes listened to his radio programs, and occasionally bought his records. Still, I didn't like Bing Crosby as much as Pop liked bananas.

That summer afternoon, on my way home from work, I stopped in a record shop, looked over the new releases, and bought a couple of Crosby platters. Further along toward home I undertook the pause that refreshes. The bartender was a young fellow—a man I'd never seen before. I had the envelope containing the records lying on the bar beside me when he came up. He looked at me, nodded toward it, and said:

"See ya got some records."

"Yep," I said.

He studied me a moment, then leaned forward and remarked:

"Bet I know what records you got."

There was nothing printed on the big envelope to suggest what was inside so I said I bet he didn't know.

"Crosby," he said.

Naturally I was a trifle agitated, being a person who holds no belief in the occult and also being convinced that no human possesses X-ray eyes.

"How did you know that?" I demanded.

He grinned. "You got that Crosby look," he said. "You look like a Crosby man."

When I got home I spent quite some time with a mirror, but I couldn't figure it. I took to worrying about the thing. I began taking a deeper interest in the doings of Bing Crosby and I started talking about him whenever I was around the Broadway know-it-alls. Little by little I acquired

anecdotes about Crosby, and after two or three months the fact dawned on me: if I hadn't been a Crosby man before, I was a Crosby man now.

The story of the guy's career and the peculiarities of his personality fascinated me. Then one day I encountered Stuart Rose, associate editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and started yammering Crosby at him. Within a week I had been given an assignment to do the story of Crosby for the *Post*. I was told that half-a-dozen writers had come to the *Post* from time to time with the same idea, but they had all been turned down. Now the *Post* editors had decided that I was the proper person to do Crosby. Apparently they looked at me as the bartender had looked at me and concluded I was a Crosby man.

I never got so sick of a thing in all my life as I did of that job. I scurried around New York for a while, digging up people who had known Crosby. I went out to Hollywood for the primary purpose of collecting Crosby material. Before I was finished I had talked to more than a hundred persons, and I had enough material on the *Life* and *Times* of Bing Crosby to produce a biography bigger than Sandburg's *Lincoln*. Part of this material appeared eventually as two articles in the *Post*. The rest of it—a bundle as big as last week's wet wash—occupies a corner of my workroom, serving me as a constant warning and reproach. It isn't a symbol of wasted effort, but rather represents a lesson I've learned—the same lesson Pop learned when he ate too many bananas.

During that assignment it seemed that every step I took I turned up a heel. I recall once having recommended a book about the Russian Romanovs to Fred Allen. Soon after that I had a note from him saying he was halfway through it. He wrote: "I haven't come across so many bastards since I played in vaudeville." I feel much the same way about the Crosby job. Looking back on it, I can remember only a couple of men I actually enjoyed meeting. One was Dr. Simon L. Ruskin, who was operating an entire hospital virtually by himself but who took an hour off and favored me with a lecture on the subject of singers' nodes with particular reference to the nodes studding the Crosby larynx. The other was Jack Kapp, president of the Decca Company, which issues Crosby records.

Mr. Kapp turned out to be a noble creature alongside most of the others; yet he gave me a few bad moments. He asked me to dinner at his house, and the dinner went along nicely until toward the end when a dish containing *broiled* grapefruit was placed in front of me. It was one of those situations where I had to make conversation and maintain a sly reconnaissance on the others, waiting for someone else to start eating to see how it was done. Such things always throw me off balance, but I was recovering poise after getting my hands on the right tools, and then somebody brought in finger bowls, and floating in the finger-bowl water was a rose petal. A full hour elapsed after dinner before I was able to ask Mr. Kapp a sensible question about

Crosby.

The quest for Crosby material furnished justification for Buddy DeSylva's remark that he didn't know eighteen men in all Hollywood who could be trusted with baseball bats in their hands. It soon became apparent to me that there is no such thing as a legitimate transaction in Hollywood—that everyone in the town is suspicious of everyone else. In its fundamentals, my job was simplicity itself. I was merely gathering material for the purpose of writing some pieces about Bing Crosby for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Yet virtually everyone I approached eyed me with skeptical distrust, asking either with the mouth or with the manner: "Okay. What's the angle?" Nobody could believe that I was simply engaged on a legitimate writing project. The theory appears to be that every man who comes around with a piece of business in hand is a double-dealer, a thimble-rigger, and a footpad.

The first Crosby I met was Everett, a muscle-bound man who is Bing's manager as well as his brother. Everett was in New York when I called on him at his office. I had been warned that he was a tough man to get along with so I put my case to him with gentleness and tact. He sat and stared straight ahead, and when I had finished telling him what I wanted to do, he grunted and said:

"Didja get Bing's permission to write about him?"

I said that Bing had indicated by telegram that he looked with favor on the project, whereupon Everett grunted again and growled:

"How much's th' *Saturday Evening Post* payin' Bing for this?"

From these two questions I quickly reached the conclusion that Everett is one of those fellows who are unhandy performing certain simple operations with a boot. I got away from him and went to Hollywood.

Personal business took me to the NBC studios on the first day I was in town. I was on my way to one of the offices, heading down a corridor, when I came upon Bing himself. He was sitting on a bench and I almost fell into his lap before I recognized him. I stuck out my hand and introduced myself.

"Oh, yeah," he said. "I heard you were comin' out."

"How've you been?" I asked.

"Fine," he said. "And you?"

"Fine," I said. And that was the last I saw of Bing.

Next on my calling list was Larry Crosby. Larry is the oldest of the Crosby boys and in theory is Bing's publicity man. I went to see him at the Crosby building on Sunset Boulevard and almost immediately I saw that he was suspicious of me. Before long I found out the nature of his apprehensions. It appears that Larry and another brother, Ted, wrote a biography of Bing back in 1927. They wrote it themselves (no question about that) and they published it themselves and they are proud of it. Bing must love them deeply to have ever permitted its publication.

Among other beautiful incidents the book tells of the time back in Spokane when Bing was a child and when his mother got word that one of her relatives had bought an automobile. This made Mrs. Crosby wistful, but little Bing toddled up to her and told her not to worry—that when he grew up they'd have a couple of automobiles.

"I'm gonna make a million dollars—just you wait and see—and you can have all kinds of servants," said tiny Bing, according to the book.

There's another occasion recited in the authorized biog-

raphy in which Pop Crosby comes home with a gramophone and sets it to playing the "Merry Widow Waltz," which causes Mrs. Crosby to grow wistful again, and once more little Bing comes over to her and says:

"Gee, Ma. You like it, don't you?"

There in the Crosby offices Larry told me he suspected I was collecting material for a book about Bing, and that such a book would be put in competition with his own book, and he wouldn't stand for any such thing as that. In other words, I was traveling under false pretenses.

When I outlined some of the things I wanted to do, Larry told me I was taking too much for granted. It was foolish of me to think of spending any time at Bing's house.

"We'll arrange to get you together with him," said Larry, "but you can't ask him anything about his private life. You can talk to him about golf and you can talk to him about horses. If you try to talk about anything else, he won't see you."

"The hell with that all over the place," I said. "I don't want to talk to him about golf and horses. If that's the setup, I don't want to talk to him at all."

After that I bade him farewell and said good-bye to Pop Crosby, who had been in the office with us, and then I went away. I didn't go back.

When I returned to New York I learned that Larry and Everett were quarreling by way of the mails, accusing each other of messing up my project, so I went to see Everett again. He practically bowed me into his office, gave me his own chair back of his desk, made a few remarks about Larry, and told me he'd give me anything and everything I wanted. And he did. During two long evening sessions he talked for hours at a stretch, telling me tales about his brother and about the whole Crosby family.

Subsequently, when he saw what I had written, my operatives tell me he let out a piercing scream.

"Whisky, whisky, whisky!" he cried. "You'd think Bing's middle name was Whisky from this stuff!"

"Well," broke in someone, "where did Smith get all those stories?"

"I gave them to him," shouted Everett, "but Jesus God, does that mean he's gotta put 'em in print?"

The Crosbys had other hysterical objections to my articles. By putting a lot of twos and twos together and cross-checking in the family's own book, I discovered conclusively that Bing was—at the time I was writing—forty years old. I could understand their objection to having this fact printed. Bing has a tremendous following among the ladies and, from that point of view, is one of the nation's champion kidney-weakners. So I was willing to go along and say nothing specific about his age. I was willing until the Crosbys demanded that I describe him as being thirty-three. That, as Artemus Ward used to put it, wuz 2 mutch.

Gathering the material, I had interviewed movie people, radio people, advertising people, newspapermen, recording people, singers, musicians—everything but racehorses. And when I was finished, I figured I knew more about Bing Crosby than Bing Crosby did. Strangely enough, even though I overloaded on Crosby just as Pop overloaded on bananas, I came out of it still admiring the guy—still a Crosby man. When I say I'm still a Crosby man, I mean I'm a BING Crosby man.

The story of Bing's career remains to me an American epic because it is the reverse of the traditional success story. Time magazine once commented that Bing made a bum out

of Horatio Alger, Jr., and that, approaching the apex of his career, he is "still falling uphill." He has been the antithesis of all that the Sunday schools and the Boy Scouts and the "Y" secretaries taught—and look at him! He has consistently violated all the rules and he still violates them whenever he chooses. His attitude toward me was the same as his attitude toward the rest of the press. Where most of the Hollywood stars look upon personal publicity as the lifeblood of their business, stooping to inane invention and trickery to get it, Bing thumbs his nose at it.

There are other shining stars who back away from interviewers and who make no compacts with the chit-chat columnists, guaranteeing those columnists full and exclusive reports on future romances, marriages, prospective whelpings, divorces, changes in hair-do, and the like. Yet none of these brushes off the press because of sheer indifference as Bing does.

The Women's Press Club of Hollywood once voted Fred Astaire the most unco-operative actor in Hollywood from a publicity point of view. Crosby came in second—a photo finish. Astaire doesn't normally co-operate because he is a shy, sensitive man who suffers anguish in the presence of an interviewer, suspecting that every question is deliberately framed for the purpose of tricking him into an asinine answer. Crosby, on the other hand, is unco-operative because he just doesn't give a damn.

Privately he justifies his behavior toward the press with two arguments. He contends that he needs publicity—the kind of publicity that comes of being interviewed—about as much as he needs a hole in his head. He has three tremendous publicity outlets at his command: a weekly radio program, three motion pictures a year, and records. These instruments spread the Crosby voice and the Crosby personality to the ends of the earth, and he is in a position to control and direct them to suit his own whims. He cannot prevent a writer from twisting his phrases and making him look foolish or hammy, but in the production of his movies, of his broadcasts, and of his recordings, he is the boss. If Crosby wants a certain thing done, it's done; and if Crosby objects to something else, out it goes. Wherefore, what need has he of the kind of publicity the press has to offer?

His second argument is his answer to the sheep cry: "But you owe it to your public." All he owes to his public, in his own logic, is his best performance, whether on the screen, on the air, or on records. His job is to entertain and amuse the customers but not on street corners or in his bedroom. He makes a picture and the customers flock into the theaters to see it. If they enjoy it, if they like his performance, then he has done his job. It is not required that he be waiting outside the theater to hand them photographs of himself, sing a couple more songs, go into a rigadon, sign their autograph books, and introduce them to his wife and kids.

His success has brought him everything he ever yearned for a thousand times over. He never yearned for much. He never believed in himself, save perhaps at the very beginning of his career when he felt he might, with help from on high, become a middling vaudeville performer.

His friends and his family have had to browbeat him and flog him up the road that led to success. Time after time, when things were beginning to break his way, he gave up, tried to disappear, announced himself a failure. He has been wheedled and bluffed and tricked into doing the things that, in the end, brought a golden torrent pouring into his lap. He achieved notoriety long before he achieved fame.

Almost to a man the people who surrounded him in the early days held no hope of his ever getting anywhere. Whenever his name came up they'd shake their heads and agree that Crosby was headed for perdition. Yet the wild and irresponsible rhythm boy of 1929 has become one of the most respectable family men in Hollywood. He has assembled part of the Crosby clan about him and they help run his extensive business affairs, sometimes quarreling among themselves but always standing united when danger threatens from without. And drinking has long since ceased to be a problem with him. He still drinks but, in his own phrase, "never in self-defense." His story inspires me because he has proved that the rule books are crazy.

The Crosbys lived on the wrong side of the tracks in Spokane and traced their ancestry back to the *Mayflower*. Pop Crosby worked in a brewery and there was a house full of kids. Al Rinker, the piano-banger who was Bing's first partner on the stage, remembers the Crosby home in Spokane quite vividly. Rinker is now in the radio business in New York. He told me that the Crosby house was like a zoo where all the animals are mad at each other. The place was in a constant uproar with the kids quarreling and fighting, and it was all Mrs. Crosby could do to keep a piece of furniture intact. Pop Crosby was never a razor-strap man. When one of the kids got out of hand it was his custom to grab up a stick of kindling wood and whack the miscreant alongside the head.

When Bing's larynx first began bringing in profits Everett was a truck salesman in Los Angeles and not doing well at it. Larry was barely getting along in an advertising agency up North. Pop and Kate Crosby still lived in Spokane. Today Pop and Kate and one of the married daughters and Everett and Larry all live comfortably in Hollywood.

As I may have suggested Everett is not the most popular man in the movie capital. He is tough and he is cunning. A lot of people who have tried to best him in a deal now hate him and curse him in company. When he gave up selling trucks to take over as manager Bing was just another vaudeville and night-club performer. Granting him his due, he has done a good job of steering his younger brother up the hill.

Half the con men and crackpots of the nation have tried at one time or another to nibble at the golden flow of Crosby money. Everett is the man who throws them out. He doesn't just throw them out the door; he hurls them into the next county. He has probably scraped through the surface of more gold bricks than any man in Hollywood. One of his perennial customers is an inventor who wants to sell Bing a grandstand for the Del Mar race track. It is no ordinary grandstand. When the horses leave the barrier, the grandstand takes off with them, riding on tracks, and travels even with the pack right around to the finish line.

There's a legend in Hollywood about a certain actor whose relatives came down upon him in such numbers that he had to move out of his own home or make provision for the visitors elsewhere. He resolved his dilemma by purchasing a complete tourist camp on the outskirts of Los Angeles and installing his kinsfolk in the cabins.

Then there's the story of the minor executive at one of the studios who proudly announced his promotion from second cousin to first cousin. And there have always been vague whisperings about stars who have mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers hidden away in the garret as though they were physical monstrosities.

Among Hollywood families the Crosbys are unique in

that all of them work. Their universe revolves around Bing and their own fortunes are wrapped up in his, and they guard him as they'd guard a gold mine. If it can be said that any one member of the family rules the rest, that one is not Bing, nor Everett, but Kate Crosby. She is in her middle sixties and fully as alert and vigorous as she was twenty years ago. She and Pop Crosby live in a bungalow eight blocks from Bing's big house.

To this day Kate Crosby refuses to hire a maid and does all the housework herself. She still cooks and sews and knits and prays as she did in Spokane. From the beginning she has kept Bing's scrapbooks and preserved his letters. Bing himself has never paid much heed to clippings, although for several years he carried two ragged newspaper notices around in his wallet—one being a review of a Crosby movie in which his name was not even mentioned, and the other being a derisive commentary on his acting.

Kate Crosby is intensely religious and keeps her children posted, where it is necessary, on holy days and days of abstinence. Back in the Spokane days it was her custom, whenever trouble confronted any member of the family, to scurry for the Poor Clare convent where she would ask for prayers of intercession. She made such visits at all crucial moments in Bing's early career, and once when Bing was asked if he believed success came through luck, he replied that he preferred attributing his progress to "the workings of Providence." Nowadays, when troublous situations arise, Kate Crosby slips a \$5.00 bill into an envelope and sends it off to the Poor Clares, asking for prayers.

She pays close attention to all of Bing's business affairs. Suppose the opening of a new Crosby picture is announced in the papers—with a photograph of Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour but no Bing. She'd be on the phone at once, demanding of Larry why Bing was left out. She telephones for Everett at the Crosby offices and, failing to get him, keeps calling all day until he shows up. Then she laces him down. Does he expect some stenographer to run the Crosby business? Does he think he can fritter away his time on the golf course with all that business piling up?

Perhaps Everett is in New York. Kate Crosby reads an item to the effect that Paramount has bought two excellent stories for Bob Hope. Off goes an air-mail letter to Everett.

"Why is it," Kate Crosby demands, "that Paramount is buying these fine stories for Bob Hope? Why aren't they buying stories like that for Harry? Get after them."

She has always called her famous son Harry.

Bing first achieved big celebrity just ten years ago, in 1933, when he was singing for CBS in New York. One of his tasks at the time was to fill out a "bio book." This is a twenty-four page folder containing a wide variety of questions with spaces for the radio artist to fill in his answers. The book is then used as source material for publicity releases. I succeeded in getting my hands on Bing's 1933 book and it contains several responses worth noting, including a voluntary declaration that he'd do anything for publicity, if only a squib in the *Bronxville Gazette*. This from the guy who, today, hides himself from interviewers and sometimes makes Donald Duck noises whenever a press camera is trained on him.

One question in the "bio book" asks what the artist would do if he had a million dollars. Bing's holograph on this subject:

I would go to California, buy a home, a boat, and a car; take

up some light work, i.e., buy a piece of some prosperous business—travel abroad a bit, fish and golf in the interim—visit the various race tracks in season, and raise a small family. If a million bucks ever came my way, I could doubtless distribute a considerable amount to relatives, etc., in loans, and still have enough to carry out the program described. I'm pretty socialistic in this connection and really don't think anyone is entitled to or should have more than they need to live comfortably. My wants are comparatively simple and with half a million I could possibly scrape along somehow. In point of fact, if I ever connect with the aforesaid amount, I'll wash up.

During that same period Joe Mitchell called on Bing for an interview. The new singing star of radio and the screen was refreshingly candid with Mr. Mitchell, particularly when it came to a discussion of his past misdemeanors.

"They say I left a trail of broken hearts behind me when I left California for New York," said Bing. "Now, I wouldn't do a thing like that. The fact is—I left a trail of broken bottles and unpaid bills."

Then his mind carried him back to the days when . . .

"I was pretty bad," said Bing. "I got in fights and things like that. Whisky has ruined my career five times in five years. I studied law in college and I can truthfully say that the bar of the state of Washington is the only bar I was ever kept out of."

"People who compare me with Vallee and the other mugs are more interested in me than I am in myself. I'd like to be able to sing like the crooners. The reason is—a crooner gets his quota of sentimentality with half his natural voice. That's a great saving. I don't like to work."

It is not my intention to go back over all that ground again because every time I get within five feet of that bundle containing the Crosby material I become afflicted with the pip—that disease in chickens which makes them droop their heads and look as though they didn't have a friend in the world. I only wanted to show people who have ambitions to write for the magazines that it's not always so simple as it looks.

(Copyright 1943.)



Wagner's feats earned him fans such as Bing Crosby, who at one time owned a piece of the Pirates.

This picture of Bing with ex-Pirate Honus Wagner is from the *Sunday Gazette* of July 10, 1934. It was submitted to us by David Tobosco.



Bing in Hollywood

By David Lobosco

A Connecticut Yankee

In King Arthur's Court

Paramount, 1949

When I first started watching and taping the movies of Bing Crosby, this was always my least-favorite movie. As the years wear on, though, I seem to enjoy it more and more.

This was the third outing on film for this Mark Twain classic. During the silent age it was filmed with the now forgotten Harry C. Myers, and in 1931 it was remade with Will Rogers. At that time Rogers was the most beloved American, just as Bing was when he starred in this remake.

Originally this 1949 version intended to use the original Rodgers and Hart score, but MGM owned the exclusive rights and would not let them go. Paramount, at Bing's insistence, brought in the team of Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, who were responsible for such Crosby gems as *Going My Way* (1944), *Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), and *Welcome Stranger* (1947).

Bing plays an average Joe from 1905 named Hank Martin. While riding a horse, he is accidentally thrown, knocked unconscious, and transported back to the time of King Arthur. He is taken to the king and thought to be a demon. After using seemingly magical powers (such as a match), he is viewed as a god. It's love at first sight when he falls head over heels for Lady Alisande La Carteloise, played by Rhonda Fleming.

Because he is viewed as a god, he sets about teaching 6th century England some modern things from how to play modern dance music to the art of crooning and winking. Bing opens a blacksmith shop, and while he observes the poor people around him, he notices how out of touch the king is. (Sounds like our modern politicians.) Therefore, Bing, King Arthur (Sir Cedric Hardwicke) and a knight (William Bendix) set about to learn more about people. While trying to save Miss Fleming and the country, Bing is knocked unconscious again and travels back to 1905. Was he dreaming? Just as he begins to believe it was all a dream, he sees Rhonda Fleming, and she winks at him as if she knows him.

Only three songs are sung by Bing in the film. Although "Once And For Always," which he sings with Rhonda Fleming, is the definitive love song, I liked "If You Stubbed Your Toe On The Moon" best. Burke and Van Heusen seemed to shine when they wrote philosophical songs. Bing was responsible for giving Rhonda Fleming her first screen kiss, and after Dixie Lee died in 1952, Bing dated Rhonda for awhile. Although this movie marked Bing's end as the number one star, the movie grows on you after awhile. It was not Bing at his best, but it was Bing nevertheless. As always, Bing "made" the movie.

Larry Kiner Is Dead

Larry F. Kiner, 64, died of cancer on Friday, July 22, 1994. It was an unexpected shock to all who knew him. He was working on a bio-discography of Bing Crosby at the time of his death.

Born in Milwaukee, Mr. Kiner liked to play piano and loved music of the 1920s and 1930s. The tall, quiet boy began collecting records when he was 12.

After his family moved to Santa Monica, CA in 1950, Mr. Kiner finished school, then worked in electronic-parts engineering, production and sales.

The family moved to Seattle in 1967. He ran some ads in a magazine and began selling tapes of radio shows.

Losing a job helped propel him into producing records of rare broadcasts by Al Jolson and Bing Crosby. He sold records to stores, distributors and mail-order clients.

Mr. Kiner collected some 4,000 reels of tape with 40,000 radio shows and wrote several books about the stars.

His wife, Patricia, died in 1991. He is survived by three sons and two daughters.

Based on an article from the *Seattle Times* provided by Vernon Wesley Taylor.

Retakes: Behind the Scenes of Five Classic Crosby Movies

By John Eastman

In alphabetical order, five of Bing's films are discussed in Mr. Eastman's book which contains stories about the making of five hundred classic movies. Nothing particularly new is covered here, but it's nice to see some of Bing's efforts included. The late Fred Reynolds' book, *The Road To Hollywood*, was filled with similar anecdotes about almost all of Bing's pictures—features and shorts—and a section on proposed and/or unfilled Crosby film projects. A most interesting read, as I'm sure you find these excerpts from *Retakes: Behind The Scenes Of 500 Classic Movies* (Ballantine Books, ©1989).
M.S.

THE COUNTRY GIRL. 1954. Filmed March-April 1954; Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Cast: Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, William Holden, Anthony Ross, Gene Reynolds. Director: George Seaton.

Gossip columnist Hedda Hopper had maliciously whispered in Bing Crosby's ear that Grace Kelly was a nymphomaniac eager to claim his body, so Crosby initially opposed her for the title role that she eagerly sought, saying that Kelly was too glamorous and inexperienced for the part. (Jennifer Jones was originally scheduled, but dropped out when she became pregnant.) But Crosby at fifty-three also had serious qualms about his own abilities for this heavy drama. Nervous in any part that required more of him than crooning to nuns or trading quips with Bob Hope, he became hypersensitive about his toupee, at one point demanding to use the same one he'd worn two decades before in *College Humor* (1933). Director Seaton, however, refused to let him be Der Bingle for the role of Frank Elgin. At Crosby's urgent request, Seaton wrote a full biography of the character for Crosby to study. Before shooting his Boston jail-cell scene, Crosby stayed up all night enlisting two of his sons to walk him around and keep him awake. His properly dissipated appearance next morning horrified his elderly mother, who walked away from the set convinced that her Bing had been drinking again. Hedda Hopper notwithstanding, both Crosby and William Holden became vastly smitten with Kelly, and both dated her; she and Holden had had a brief romantic fling just beforehand while starring in *The Bridges At Toko-Ri* (1954). Kelly, at twenty-four, won an Academy Award for best actress but later said she could have done much better in the role if she'd been five years older. Seaton also won an Oscar for his adaptation of Clifford Odets's original playscript.

GOING MY WAY. 1944. Filmed August 1943-February 1944; Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Cast: Bing Crosby, Barry Fitzgerald, Risë Stevens, Frank McHugh, Gene Lockhart, William Frawley. Director: Leo McCarey.

Studio executives were so worried about Catholic church reaction to this sentimental comedy (originally titled *The Padre*) that they shelved it for six months after its completion. They needn't have feared; one of its most devoted fans was Pope Pius XII, who kept a print for personal viewing. Producer-director Leo McCarey threw his own life savings into the production, audaciously casting as priests a well-known crooner (who was, at least, Roman Catholic) and an Irish Lutheran character actor mainly noted for playing drunken old rogues. Production began without a complete script, McCarey and his "priests" improvising scenes as they went along. Bing Crosby modeled his role of Father O'Malley on one of his tutors at Gonzaga University. (Two priests at St. Monica's Church in Santa Monica had inspired McCarey's screenplay.) McCarey despaired at times of teaching Barry Fitzgerald, a 1936 immigrant from Dublin's famed Abbey Theater, not to genuflect backwards. Fitzgerald had to anglicize his genuine brogue just to be understood—then, during playbacks, he said he couldn't understand himself. Bing's song "Swinging On A Star," one of his big hits, was inspired when composer Jimmy Van Heusen heard the crooner admonish one of his sons: "What do you want to be—a mule?" Crosby reprised his priestly role in *The Bells Of St. Mary's* (1945) and *Say One For Me* (1959). *Going My Way* won seven Academy Awards, among them best picture, best actor (Crosby), and best supporting actor (Fitzgerald).

HOLIDAY INN. 1942. Filmed winter-spring 1942; Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Cast: Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Marjorie Reynolds, Virginia Dale, Walter Abel, Louise Beavers. Director: Mark Sandrich.

The musical comedy that introduced Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" also gave its title to the national chain of motels. Ironically, in view of Bing Crosby's later identification with the tune, he initially tried to get out of singing it because, being a devout Catholic, he feared it would further commercialize the holiday. Berlin, who conceived the idea for the film, had composed "White Christmas" in 1939, then laid it aside until resurrecting it here. The song's huge success as a nostalgic reminder of home fires during the darkest period of World War II caught both him and Crosby by surprise. Crosby virtually adopted it as a personal Yuletide anthem, singing it in two subsequent films—*Blue Skies* (1946) and *White Christmas* (1954)—as well as in his annual TV specials. **45**

Fred Astaire, in his frenzied jitterbug dance with Marjorie Reynolds, was supposed to look inebriated, so he downed two stiff shots of bourbon before each take. There were seven takes; "the last one was the best," he reported. For his notable firecracker dance on an electrically wired stage, Astaire rehearsed endlessly, making thirty-eight takes over three days; the intricate sequence is reputedly the fastest dance number ever filmed. Astaire began the film weighing 140 pounds, ended it at 126. An Academy Award went to Berlin for his best-known song.

ROAD TO BALL. Filmed spring-summer 1952; Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Cast: Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Murvyn Vye, Pete Coe. Director: Hal Walker.

The sixth of the seven Bob Hope-Bing Crosby *Road* pictures (originally titled *Road To Hollywood*) was also the first of the series in color and is the only one available to date on video. Spontaneous gags, Hollywood in-jokes, and fast improvisation marked the interplay between the costars in all these films. In this one, Crosby put up a brave front, for his first wife, actress Dixie Lee, was terminally ill with cancer (she died about three months after filming ended). Several cameo appearances included those of Humphrey Bogart, mocking his character in *The African Queen*, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, and Jane Russell. This was the only Crosby film in which his brother, bandleader Bob Crosby, also appeared. The script kept changing as filming proceeded; the leads worked on the picture for months before they knew the plot. Dorothy Lamour refused to make a record album of songs from the movie because financial arrangements would have shorted her in comparison with Hope and Crosby's take. When those two underhandedly went ahead and made the album anyway (using Peggy Lee for Lamour's song parts), Lamour was understandably miffed.

WHITE CHRISTMAS. 1954. Filmed summer-autumn 1953; Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Cast: Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen, Dean Jagger. Director: Michael Curtiz.

A sort of remake of *Holiday Inn*, in which Bing Crosby had introduced Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," this film was made chiefly as a reprise for Crosby and the song, though Berlin wrote nine new tunes for it, too. It also bore strong resemblances to a previous Michael Curtiz-directed film, *I'll See You In My Dreams* (1952). Screenwriters Norman Panama and Melvin Frank, called in to beef up Danny Kaye's part in Norman Krasna's screenplay, recalled the filming as "eight terrible weeks of shouting and screaming." As third choice for his role of Phil Davis, Kaye was feeling a bit prickly about the whole thing and not disposed to taking a back seat to Crosby. The studio had wanted Fred Astaire to repeat his sidekick role as in the 1942 film, but the old hooper decided he was now too old for such a part and refused. Then Donald O'Connor hurt his back and couldn't dance, so Kaye was cast. Dean Jagger, playing the general, said he felt better bald and hated wearing a hairpiece in the movie. One of the few bright spots during filming involved Hungarian-born Curtiz's infamous accent and chopped diction. The screenwriters had to explain each joke in the script to Curtiz, a laborious effort that most often left him none the wiser. Despite its thin story line, however, *White Christmas* proved one of Crosby's biggest moneymakers. This film ranks historically as the first made in Vista Vision, a new deep-focus process.

Editor's Note: The type in this article has been reset without editorial changes.



First day cover courtesy of Charles Baillie

Club Crosby

It is doubtful if any of the current members of Club Crosby were a part of the original band of Crosby enthusiasts who decided to form a fan club in 1936. Nearly sixty years later we cringe a bit at the words "fan club," preferring to be known as collectors or appreciation society, but remember what Shakespeare said about names and roses. Fan clubs were new and controversial in 1936. They organized and folded at alarming rates, and the early journals seem obsessed with justifying themselves and their legality.

We have not taken a survey, but it would appear that our oldest member in terms of membership years is Shirley Naylor of Orange, New South Wales, Australia, who has been a member of the club for 45 years! Our youngest member, in terms of age, is Charlie Grainger of Island Heights, New Jersey, who is 10 years old. We are most likely America's oldest fan club.

The exact beginning of the club is obscure and a copy of the first issue of our journal has not turned up, but the volume numbering of the early journals would indicate that it began in 1936. Cecilia Joseph of North Vassalboro, Maine was the first club president. Dues were 50 cents per year in the U.S.A. and 75 cents overseas. The journal, *Bingang*, a quarterly publication in those days, was soon dominated by its Canadian editor, Sid Gath. Syd's gift for humorous writing was the journal's strongest asset in the early days when its size averaged only 10 pages per issue.

Bing was young; the membership was young. The mood was one of exuberance and a "can it last" questioning. Both Bing Crosby and his brother Larry supported the club. Reproductions of their letters abound and in the summer 1939 issue Bing even penned an editorial called "Keeping Your Feet on the Ground." It was a sound philosophy for someone about to emerge from the major early successes of the 30s into America's superstar of the war years.

During World War II Service honor rolls, "Why I Like Bing" and "I Saw Bing" articles, poetry, and long membership lists were journal staples. There was much excitement over Bing's performance as Father O'Malley and the Crosby/Sinatra rivalry. After the war Ruth Ness of Miami, Florida became president. Ruth wrote the first history of the club in 1948.

In 1951 Paramount pictures issued a special souvenir issue of *Bingang* in conjunction with the

release of Bing's film *Mr. Music*. It was distributed in the lobby of the Paramount Theatre in New York at the premiere of the film.

In 1957 Rena Albanesi of Bridgeport, Connecticut became president, a post which she was to hold for 13 years. Rena was one of the most consistent contributors, and the journals produced under her leadership are an indispensable chronicle of Bing's career in the 60's. In 1971 Rena resigned and the club was taken over by acting vice-president Priscilla Koernig of San Francisco. Priscilla and Pat Sullivan of Chico, California guided the club's destiny until 1980, when Al Sutton of Sacramento, California became the president of the club and editor of our journal.

In 1987 the present officers of the club came on the scene. Mark Scrimger of Parma, Michigan is the president. Mark, an avid collector of everything Crosby, provides many articles and pictures for our journal. The vice-president and editor is Wayne Martin, a retired teacher and ex-printer.

Our journal, *Bingang*, is issued semi-annually. There are 50+ pages in each issue covering all aspects of Bing's career. The club does not sell records or other Crosby items, but our journal provides free classified ads for those who have Crosby material to sell or trade or those who have wants.

Compiled by Wayne Martin. Includes material written by Pat Sullivan for the fortieth anniversary of Club Crosby. Membership is \$11.00 per year. For more information about the club write to Club Crosby, P. O. Box 3849, Kirkwood, MO 63122. If you would like a sample copy of *Bingang*, please send \$1.50 for first class mailing and handling.

This little history of Club Crosby was put together for publication in the "Fan Club Spotlight" section of the *Fan Club Monitor*, the official journal of the National Association of Fan Clubs. We are enclosing it in letters written to prospective Club Crosby members.

We thought that our members would be interested in seeing it, as it contains a short history of the club. As noted above, most of the material was included in the history published in *Bingang* in observance of the club's 40th anniversary.

New Releases

With Contributions by Charles Baillie ♦ Richard Duncan ♦
Don Eagle ♦ Carmel Gene Gallegos ♦ David Lobosco ♦
Ernest Sutkowski ♦ Greg Van Beek ♦ Frank Whittaker

Compact Discs

■ **BING CROSBY'S GREATEST HITS; ORIGINAL RECORDINGS 1934-1943.** EPM-983002 (France). Two discs. CONTENTS (DISC 1): White Christmas • Stardust • You Made Me Love You • Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams • Beautiful Dreamer • Ain't Got A Dime To My Name • My Melancholy Baby • It Must Be True • Santa Claus Is Coming To Town • Jingle Bells • When My Dreamboat Comes Home • Someday, Sweetheart • Yes, Indeed • Basin Street Blues • The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid • The Birth Of The Blues • You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby • Lazy • Sweet Potato Piper • I Ain't Got Nobody. (DISC 2): Deep In The Heart Of Texas • Missouri Waltz • Dolores • Aloha Kuu Ipo Aloha • Ciribiribin • Marcheta • Yodelin' Jive • San Antonio Rose • Remember Hawaii • Birds Of A Feather • An Apple For The Teacher • Now It Can Be Told • Easter Parade • I'll Capture Your Heart • Love Is Just Around The Corner • I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams • Sing A Song Of Sunbeams • Moonlight And Shadows • The Moon And The Willow Tree • You Are My Sunshine.

■ **BING CROSBY ARMED FORCES BROADCASTS.** Laserlight 12-298/302. Five discs. CONTENTS (DISC 1): *KMH radio broadcast Oct. 7, 1943:* Road To Victory • I'll Be Home For Christmas • Nobody's Sweetheart • Comedy Routine • One Alone • Sunday, Monday, Or Always • *KMH radio broadcast Dec. 16, 1943:* Pistol Packin' Mama • Oh, What A Beautiful Morning • I Used To Love You • Comedy Routine • Shoo Shoo Baby • White Christmas. Features Lucille Ball, Phil Silvers, Joan Davis, Trudy Irwin, The Music Maids, The Charioteers, and John Scott Trotter Orch. (DISC 2): *KMH radio broadcast Apr. 13, 1944:* Swinging On A Star • Take It Easy • Speak To Me Of Love • The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else • It's Love, Love, Love • Amor • *KMH radio broadcast June 15, 1944:* Bless 'Em All • Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet • The Day After Forever • Together • Put It There, Pal • I'll Be Seeing You. Features Bob Hope, Marilyn Maxwell, The Music Maids, The Charioteers, and John Scott Trotter Orch. (DISC 3): *KMH radio broadcast March 9, 1944:* The Bombardier Song • Mexicali Rose • Witness For My Lord • I Couldn't Sleep A Wink Last Night • Two Sleepy People • Going My Way • *KMH radio broadcast June 29, 1944:* Swinging On A Star • There's A Small Hotel • The General Jumped At Dawn • Square Dance • It Had To Be You • San Fernando Valley. Features George Murphy, Roy Rogers, Marilyn Maxwell, The Music Maids, The Charioteers, and John Scott Trotter Orch. (DISC 4): *KMH radio broadcast Jan.*

25, 1945: Don't Fence Me In • Strange Music • Jesus Is A Rock In A Weary Land • This Heart Of Mine • One Meatball • Sleigh Ride In July • That's For Me • Ain't It A Shame About Mame • Only Forever • *KMH radio broadcast Jan. 18, 1945:* Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive • There Goes That Song Again • Running Wild • Frankie And Johnny • You've Got Me Where You Want Me • Down By The River • It's Easy To Remember • Soon • Swanee River. Features The Andrews Sisters, Duke Ellington, Eugenie Baird, The Charioteers, and John Scott Trotter Orch. (DISC 5): *KMH radio broadcast July 6, 1944:* Sno Qualimie Jo Jo • Together • Tumbling Tumbleweeds • Sandman • Exactly Like You • I'll Get By • Amor • *KMH radio broadcast Nov. 30, 1944:* Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby? • I Promise You • The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else • Jeepers Creepers • Glow Worm • I'm Making Believe • Medley: With Every Breath I Take/Love Is Just Around The Corner/June In January. Features Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Spike Jones, Marilyn Maxwell, Eugenie Baird, The Charioteers, and John Scott Trotter Orch.

Note: All Kraft Music Hall programs are complete with songs, comedy sketches, commercials and World War II news bulletins.

David Lobosco hit the jackpot and bought this set at Camelot for \$19.00. He writes that the quality is "unbelievable." If you can't find it locally, it is available from Collector's Choice Music, P. O. Box 838, Itasca, IL 60143-0838. The catalog number is AHLAS-59342. Cost is \$39.95, and the shipping charge is \$4.50 per order.

Carmel Gene Gallegos has also highly recommended this set. See his remarks in the "Readers Write" section.

Incidentally, the notes for this set were written by Club Crosby member Laurence Zwisohn, author of *Bing Crosby—A Lifetime of Music*.

■ **BING CROSBY COUNTRY STYLE.** Premium Masters PCD-10044 (Australia). CONTENTS: Country Style • When The Bloom Is On The Sage • Home On The Range • Ridin' Down The Canyon • Sioux City Sue • New San Antonio Rose • The Old Oaken Bucket • Pistol Packin' Mama • San Fernando Valley • Don't Fence Me In • Dear Hearts And Gentle People • I'm An Old Cowhand • You Are My Sunshine • El Rancho Grande • Tumbling Tumbleweeds • Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle • Twilight On The Trail • Empty Saddles • Roundup Lullaby • Along The Navajo Trail.

■ **ST. PATRICK'S DAY; BING CROSBY.** Premium Masters PCD-10041 (Australia). CONTENTS: Dear Old Donegal • Did Your Mother Come From Ireland? • It's The Same Old Shillelagh • McNamara's Band • The Rose Of Tralee • When Irish Eyes Are Smiling • Where The River Shannon Flows • Who Threw

The Overalls In Mrs. Murphy's Chowder? • Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral • I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen • How Can You Buy Killarney? • Isle of Innisfree • The Donovans • St. Patrick's Day Parade • With My Shillelagh Under My Arm • Two-Shillelagh O'Sullivan • Galway Bay • My Girl's An Irish Girl • Eileen • Christmas In Killarney.

■ **BING CROSBY 1927 TO 1934. ABC 836-172-2 (Australia)** CONTENTS: Someday Sweetheart • Mary • So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together • I Surrender, Dear • Where The Blue Of The Night • Please • Thanks • The Last Round-Up • St. Louis Blues • Black Moonlight • Beautiful Girl • We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines • Temptation • Did You Ever See A Dream Walking? • She Reminds Me Of You • Love In Bloom.

■ **CLASSIC CROSBY 1931 TO 1938. ABC 838-985-2 (Australia)** CONTENTS: Sweet Georgia Brown • How Deep Is The Ocean? • Dinah • Love Thy Neighbor • Once In A Blue Moon • Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady • May I? • My Honey's Lovin' Arms • Home On The Range • You've Got Me Crying Again • After Sundown • Some Of These Days • Shadows Of Love • Basin Street Blues • Me And The Moon • Sail Along, Silv'ry Moon • I'm Falling In Love With Someone • A Blues Serenade.

■ **MY GREATEST SONGS: BING CROSBY. MCA MCD-18348 (Australia)** CONTENTS: Play A Simple Melody • Mona Lisa • Swinging On A Star • Paper Doll • White Christmas • Mule Train • Pennies From Heaven • My Blue Heaven • Don't Fence Me In • McNamara's Band • Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo Ral • The Whiffenpoof Song • Jingle Bells • When My Baby Smiles At Me.

■ **BING CROSBY CLASSICS; JAZZ COLLECTION. Object Enterprises OR 0084 (U.K.)** CONTENTS: Where The Blue Of The Night • I Found A Million-Dollar Baby • At Your Command • Dancing In The Dark • Now That You're Gone • Too Late • Sweet And Lovely • A Faded Summer Love • Just One More Chance • I'm Through With Love • Out Of Nowhere • Goodnight, Sweetheart • I Apologize • Star Dust • Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams • Just A Gigolo • I Surrender, Dear • If You Should Ever Need Me.

■ **DINAH: BING CROSBY. Pilz, Ltd. PILZ-448212-2.** CONTENTS: Where The Blue Of The Night • Sweet And Lovely • Dinah • Shine • Sweet Georgia Brown • Cabin In The Cotton • Some Of These Days • You're Beautiful Tonight, My Dear • You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me • You've Got Me Crying Again • Temptation • May I? • June In January • With Every Breath I Take • I'm An Old Cowhand • Mr. Gallagher And Mr. Shean • You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby •

■ **BING CROSBY: THE COLLECTION. Castle Communications CCSCD-275.** CONTENTS: Yes, Sir, That's My Baby • My Baby Just Cares For Me • The Tender Trap • Count Your Blessings • True Love (w/Rosemary Clooney) • You're The Top • Straight Down The Middle • Nice Work If You Can Get It • Unchained Melody • Come Rain Or Come Shine • Isle Of Capri • Love Is The Sweetest Thing • Way Down Yonder In New Orleans • When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Bobbin' Along • Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland • Old Cape Cod • At The Jazz Band Ball • We're In The Money • Ain't Misbehavin' • The Lady Is A Tramp • She's Funny That Way • Misty • My Funny Valentine • Love's Old Sweet Song.

■ **THE BING CROSBY COLLECTION. Pickwick PKD-3192 (Australia)** CONTENTS: I Surrender, Dear • Where The Blue Of The Night • Please • Did You Ever See A Dream Walking? • She Reminds Me Of You • Love In Bloom • Thanks • The Last Round-Up • Someday, Sweetheart • Mary • So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together • We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines • Temptation • St. Louis Blues • Black Moonlight • Beautiful Girl.

■ **TAKE A LONGER LOOK. Limited Collectors Issue HLYCD-002.** CONTENTS: Tower Of Babel • Never Be Afraid • The Human Race • Boy At A Window • John Barleycorn • For Want Of A Nail • Christmas Candles • A Home In The Meadow • This Is A Great Country • It's Christmas Time Again • Incident At Rogers Creek • A Little Love, A Little While • The Best-Dressed Man In The World • They All Lived Happily Ever After • I Love You, Whoever You Are • Go Tell It On The Mountain • We Wish You The Merriest • You Never Had It So Good • The Secret Of Christmas • How Lovely Is Christmas • Living One Day At A Time • My Own Individual Star • Once Upon A Long Time Ago • This Land Is Your Land • When You're In Love • Take A Longer Look.

■ **BING CROSBY: ON THE SENTIMENTAL SIDE. Fat Boy Records FAT CD-172.** CONTENTS: My Heart Is Taking Lessons • The Funny Old Hills • Joobalai • East Side Of Heaven • Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb • On The Sentimental Side • This Is My Night To Dream • I Have Eyes • You're A Sweet Little Headache • That Sly Old Gentleman • An Apple For The Teacher • A Man And His Dream • Still The Bluebird Sings • April Played The Fiddle • The Moon And The Willow Tree • Meet The Sun Halfway.

■ **DUETS. Charly CDCD-1165 (UK).** SELECTIONS WITH BING: Gypsy Love Song (w/Frances Langford) • The Whistler's Mother-In-Law (w/Muriel Lane) • On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen (w/Johnny Mercer) • Bob White (w/Connee Boswell) • Mister Meadowlark (w/Johnny Mercer) • I'm Falling In Love With Someone (w/Frances Langford) • Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut Street (w/Connee Boswell) • Tea For Two (w/Connee Boswell) • Basin Street Blues (w/Connee Boswell). Others non-Bing.

David Lobosco reports buying this disc at Camelot Music Store for only \$7.00. Great sound, he says.

■ **THE IMMORTAL BING CROSBY. Avid AVC-535 (UK).** CONTENTS: Pennies From Heaven • Brother Can You Spare A Dime? • I'm Through With Love • Mississippi Mud • Just One More Chance • Cabin In The Cotton • Moon Of Manakoora • Just A Gigolo • I'm An Old Cowhand • Love Is Just Around The Corner • I Surrender, Dear • Let Me Call You Sweetheart • I've Got The World On A String • Sweet Leilani • The Very Thought Of You • I Wished On The Moon • 'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So • You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby • If I Had My Way • Home On The Range • How Deep Is The Ocean? • Dancing In The Dark • Here Is My Heart • My Kinda Love • Let's Call A Heart A Heart. Info from ICC *Bing*.

■ **TRUE LOVE. Elite 845471-2 (Canada)** CONTENTS: True Love • The Tender Trap • Misty • Chances Are • Count Your Blessings • Try A Little Tenderness • I Wish You Love • Unchained Melody • Come Rain Or Come Shine • Love's Old Sweet Song. (From Ken Barnes' augmented Buddy Cole/Bing tracks.)

■ **MEL TORME: A TRIBUTE TO BING CROSBY, PARAMOUNT'S GREATEST SINGER.** Concord Jazz CCD-4614. Also available on cassette, CJ-614-C. CONTENTS: This Is My Night To Dream/It Must Be True • Moonlight Becomes You • I Can't Escape From You • With Every Breath I Take • A Man And His Dreams • Without A Word Of Warning • May I? • Please • Thanks • Don't Let That Moon Get Away • Soon • It's Easy To Remember • Love In Bloom • The Day You Came Along • Pennies From Heaven • Learn To Croon.

"Torme sounds a cautionary note in his liner notes, warning that Crosby, once the most heard voice on the planet, has become 'the Forgotten Man' in 1994. 'Without Bing,' he warns, 'there would have been no Sinatra or Haymes or Como or any of the rest of us. Bing Crosby was THE role model, and without him as the pathfinder, we would have all lost our way. . .'"

"And in [his new book] *My Singing Teachers*, Torme confesses, 'If there is anyone I have modeled myself after over the years, I would have to say it is Bing Crosby.'"

—Owen McNally in the *Hartford Courant*.

Mel Torme presented "A Tribute To Bing Crosby, Paramount's Greatest Singer" at Michael's Pub in New York City beginning on September 13.

"Always a performer who delivers the goods, Torme's show was no disappointment to his fans. Singing with his own trio, he mixes an exhausting medley together and somehow manages to make this palatable after fusing numerous songs into this melange. A short tribute to Bing Crosby involved a few reminiscences and a smooth 'Learn To Croon' that sealed the evening as the most memorable jazz in town by one leader of the grand."

—John Hoglund in *Cabaret Hotline*.

Editor's Note: We continue to recommend the following sources for foreign CDs: Mr. Nostalgia, P. O. Box 26494, Tamarac, FL 33320 (phone 305-726-5420); and Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003 (phone 212-533-1572—ask for Bill Daugherty).

Audio Tapes

Greg Van Beek sent us this note:

On July 24, our local AM radio station, WBKV, carried a syndicated radio show called "In The Spotlight." It's on every week for two hours and spotlights great artists like Sinatra, Cole, Lee, Horne, etc. The July 24 edition was a two-hour Bing tribute. Bob Hope, Rosie Clooney, Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, and Andy Williams all had nothing but praise for Bing. A guy named Jim Harlan hosts the show. If you would like a two-hour stereo cassette of the show, send \$12.95 (check or money order) to "In The Spotlight—Bing Crosby," P.O. Box 218, Little Falls NJ 07424. It's a great show. There are even comments by Bing interspersed in the show. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Books

■ **BING CROSBY: A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY**, by J. Roger Osterholm. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1994. (Number 58, *Bio-Bibliographies In The Performing Arts*). Cost: \$65, less 20% discount, plus \$3.50 (in the U.S.A.) shipping charge.

Bing Crosby joins such stars as Al Jolson, Mary Martin, and Ethel Merman in this distinguished series of bio-bibliographies from Greenwood Press. The 474-page book is packed with facts about Bing. It is intended as a quick reference book for those doing research on Bing.

To order this book using a credit card, call (toll free, 24 hours a day) 1-800-225-5800. To receive your 20% discount, mention Code F227 to the operator. Your editor received his copy in about a week. To order by mail, enclose a check, money order, or credit card information for a total of \$55.50. Customers in Maryland and Connecticut must add their sales tax, and Canadian customers must remit in U.S. funds and add the GST tax. Shipping to Canada is \$5.00. We have no information on overseas shipments. In ordering by mail, be sure to include the F227 code number mentioned above so you will receive your discount. Send the order to Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007.

Although the book is rather pricey, most of you who are really serious about your Crosby book collection will want it. The major sections are: Biography; Chronology; Discography; Filmography; Radiography; Bibliography; and Subject Index.

Those who have Tim Morgereth's book, *Bing Crosby: A Discography, Radio Program List and Filmography* (McFarland & Co., 1987), will see similarities in the two books. Morgereth's book, however, lacks the Biography, Videography and Bibliography sections, and his Discography covers 78 rpm records only.

The Biography section is impartially and succinctly written and does not add a great deal to a Crosby collector's knowledge of Bing's life. However, it serves adequately as a quick reference to major and minor events in Bing's life and career.

The Bibliography segment seems to be reasonably complete as far as major books dealing with Bing are concerned. As to the articles, it would be next to impossible to round up every article ever published in newspapers and magazines, but many of the better-known articles are included. Incidentally, this section lists *Bing* as a "semi-annual, 24-page magazine from Club Crosby, Kirkwood, Mo. Begun about 1937 in Maine." It's been a long time since we ran only 24 pages. Under "Bing Crosby Clubs," our club's address, date of founding and the president's name are correctly listed, the only error being the amount of the annual dues (\$12 instead of \$11).

The Discography section is a standard chronological listing. Things get a bit confused when Mr. Osterholm gets to the LP entries. It would take more space than was available to do a really adequate job on a Bing Crosby discography. If you have Bishop and Bassett's book, *Bing—Just For The Record*, you will probably prefer to use it for record research purposes, and don't forget about Fred Reynolds' fine work in this area.

The Filmography, Radiography, and Videography segments are more than adequate. The "Selected Home Videos" section lists video tapes that you may not have been aware of before.

The Subject Index seems to be very complete and is a very useful guide to the contents of the book.

Highly recommended by your editor.

W.L.M.

SWAPS AND SUCH

DUE TO matters beyond my control, I would like to sell several hundred Bing Crosby LP's and about a dozen Crosby books. Listing available. Stanley Wayman, 18 Beckerle St., Danbury, CT 06811-4608.

LOOKING FOR *Bing's Hollywood* series on LP or CD. Will pay reasonable price or make a trade. David Lobosco, 2533 Rose Dr., Glenshaw, PA 15116.

WANTED: Decca 78 rpm albums: BING CROSBY: A-536, *Our Common Heritage*; DAU-725, *Ichabod*; A-629, *Road To Rio*; A-702, *Bing Sings George Gershwin Songs*; A-626, *Lullaby Land*. JUDY GARLAND: A-349, *Second Souvenir Album*; A-362, *Girl Crazy*; A-380, *Meet Me In St. Louis*; A-388, *The Harvey Girls*. Have an extra A-550, *Merry Christmas Album* for partial trade. Greg Van Beek, 929 Hillcrest St., West Bend, WI 53095, phone (414) 338-8986 (6 p.m.-9 p.m. CST).

BING CROSBY appeared on over 400 LP albums, both 10 and 12-inch, with Bing on just one selection, several selections, or the entire album. Often the same album appeared under several different catalog numbers or on other labels. A complete contents listing is available at cost, one page per album at 15 cents for the photostat copies, plus postage. Stanley F. Wayman, 18 Beckerle St., Danbury, CT 06811-4608, (203) 798-6262.

FOR SALE: *Bing: A Musical Autobiography*, several other Crosby records. Peggy Cloud, 453 Upton St., Redwood City, CA 94062-2939, (415) 368-0448.

FOR SALE: A number of Bing's LPs and 78s. Also Crosby books, magazines and sheet music. Write for a list. James Bauman, 400 37th St. NW, Canton OH 44709.

FOR SALE: My late husband's collection of Bing Crosby 78s and LPs, including Readers Digest boxed sets and the Autobiography set, also issues of *The Crosby Collector* from the early 70's. Ruth Ash, 3062 Avenue V, Apt. 2C, Brooklyn NY 11229.

WANTED: Do you want your Bing records (or duplicates) to have a loving home, where radio audiences can enjoy them for years to come? I am a Bing collector who broadcasts occasional 3-hour Bing shows in prime time. Looking for 78s, 45s, 10" LPs, and Collectors LPs. Especially want 78's; Bing's Decca Religious Songs; Australian LPs; and Limited Edition Club LPs (Volumes 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11). Call or write Kevin Roberts, 17 Willow Ave., Albany NY 12205; 518-869-0556. Drop me a line if you are a fellow collector of 78s, LPs or CDs.

WANTED: Earnestly desire to acquire tape of Bing singing "White Christmas" on his 12/25/41 Kraft Show and on 5/29/42 in Decca's L.A. studios, master No. DLA-3009-A (Please note unreleased Take A only). Carmel Gene Gallegos, 776 Commerce, #103, Tacoma, WA 98401. Weekends: 1-800-572-4767 (Code 67).

FOR SALE: An extra copy of Charles Thompson's book, *Bing: The Authorized Biography*. Best offer. Write to the Editor, *Bingang*, P. O. Box 3849, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

WANTED: Kraft Music Hall shows on audio tape; *Hollywood Palace* and sitcom shows on video cassettes. Let me know what you have. Aldo Silengo, P.O. Box 1, North Haven CT 06473.

SOME BACK ISSUES of *Bingang* are available at \$2.50 each, including third class postage. Write to the editor for details.

OTHER CROSBY ORGANIZATIONS

BING'S FRIENDS & COLLECTORS SOCIETY
236 Andrieux St.
Sonoma, CA 95476

BINGTHINGS SOCIETY
5021 57th Ave. Court West
Tacoma, WA 98467

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE (U.K.)
F. B. Wiggins, U. S. Representative
5608 North 34th St.
Arlington, VA 22207

QUEENSLAND BING CROSBY SOCIETY
P. O. Box 92, Ferney Hills
Queensland, Australia 4055

OTHER FAN CLUBS OF INTEREST

INTERNATIONAL AL JOLSON SOCIETY
933 Fifth Ave.
Prospect Park, PA 19076

INTERNATIONAL SINATRA SOCIETY
P. O. Box 7176
Lakeland, FL 33807-7176

EDDIE CANTOR APPRECIATION SOCIETY
P. O. Box 312
Mount Gay, WV 25637

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FAN CLUBS
P. O. Box 7487
Burbank, CA 91510-7487

(Editor's note: Club Crosby recently joined this organization. The annual membership fee for our club is about the same as what our members pay, and we feel that it will be a good investment for our club. We also ran a quarter-page ad in the 1995 directory. Hopefully, it will encourage new members. An annual directory of fan clubs around the world is published. If you are interested in joining the NAFC, write to the address given above.)

The other fan clubs listed are those with which we have exchange agreements. We have found them to be reliable and to have interesting journals.)

We'd like to let this remarkable
motion picture speak for itself!

In this scene, two men are talking
about their marriage — to the same
woman. Earl Carleton (Bing Crosby)
is the ex-husband who was given
custody of the only child. Bryan
Seward, a lawyer, is the present husband.

P. 26
20
CONT'D
(2)

Earl
What do you get out of this custody suit -- aside from
a few fancy headaches?

Seward
Let's say I get a happily married life.

Earl
And a ready-made family. Playing father to somebody else's
kid. Think you could take my place with my boy?

Seward
I wouldn't try.

Earl
Nice of you. Too bad you didn't feel that way with
my wife.

Seward
I don't think either one of us wanted to fall in love -- but
we did. And here we are. You'd better learn to live
with that.

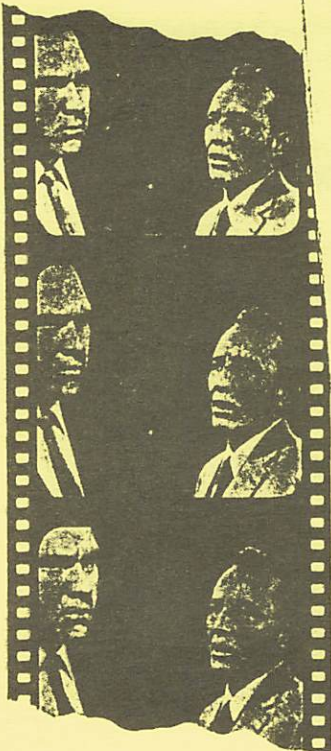
Earl
Must give you a funny feeling, talking to somebody who
knows her better than you do.

Seward
What do you mean by that?

Earl
Isn't it funny how if you touch the back of her neck a
certain way she starts to tremble -- you've found that out
by now, haven't you?

Seward
Know any good dirty jokes?

EARL STARTS FOR THE DOOR AND TURNS TO....



A new first
in his exciting
career!

M-G-M PRESENTS A SOL C. SIEGEL PRODUCTION • STARRING

BING CROSBY IN MAN ON FIRE

CO-STARRING INGER STEVENS • MARY FICKETT • E. G. MARSHALL
WITH MALCOLM BRODRICK • SCREEN PLAY BY RANALD MacDOUGALL
BASED ON A STORY BY
MALVIN WALD and JACK JACOBS • DIRECTED BY RANALD MacDOUGALL

Add To Or Start Your Own Bing Crosby Collection

The Crosby Student Center has a number of Bing Crosby souvenir items for sale to the public. These include coasters, coffee mugs, and other items to remind you of Bing and your visit to the Crosbyana Room at Gonzaga University. Telephone and mail orders are welcomed; call (509) 328-4220, Ext. 6371 for information.

Bring A Group To The Crosby Exhibit

Gonzaga University welcomes groups who would like a special introduction to the Crosby Collection and a tour of his boyhood home. Call the Director of Marketing at (509) 328-4220, Ext. 6371, to make advance arrangements.

Want To Know More About Bing?

Gonzaga's Special Collections Department, will be pleased to provide information about Bing's association with Gonzaga University, our growing collection and exhibits, and other information of interest. You may write or call (509) 328-4220, Ext. 3847 between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

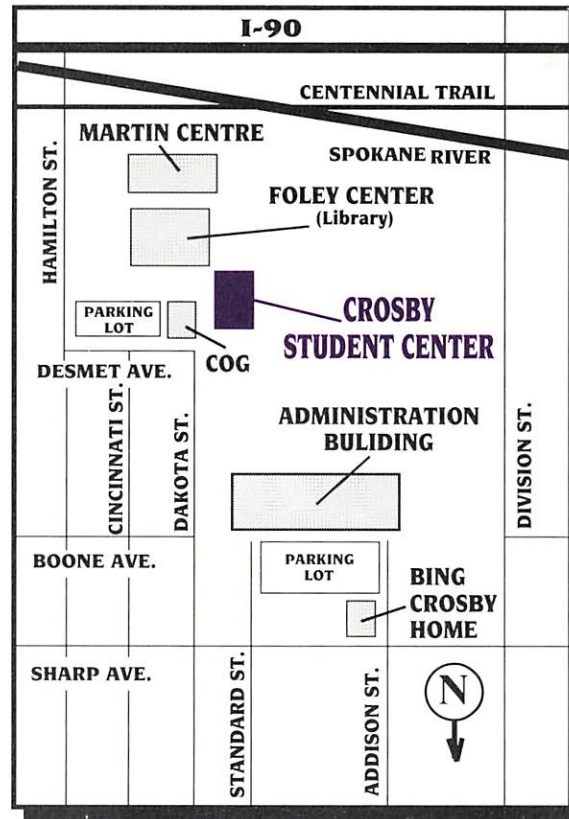
Collection Viewing Hours

The Crosbyana Room of the Crosby Student Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to midnight Monday-Friday and from 11 a.m.-midnight on Saturday and Sunday from Sept.-May. Summer hours are more limited. For information call (509) 328-4220, Ext. 4279.

About Gonzaga University

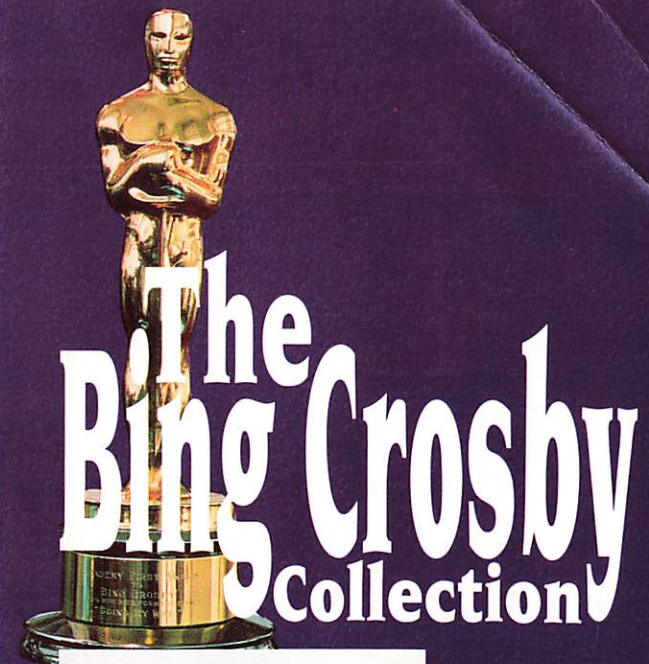
Gonzaga University is an independent, liberal arts university with a student enrollment of more than 5,000. One of 28 Jesuit colleges in the United States, Gonzaga also offers accredited degree programs in business administration, engineering and education, as well as degrees in 23 master's programs and one doctoral program. The Gonzaga University School of Law is one of three in the state of Washington.

Gonzaga has been consistently ranked among the nation's outstanding universities by a number of national publications, including the National Review's "America's Top 50 Liberal Arts Schools," U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges", Barron's "Best Buys in College Education," and the Princeton Review.

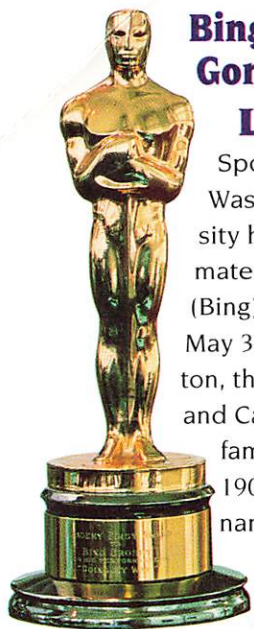


GONZAGA
UNIVERSITY

The Bing Crosby Collection
Gonzaga University
Spokane, WA 99258-0001



Gonzaga University



Bing Crosby and Gonzaga University

Located on the banks of the Spokane River in Spokane, Washington, Gonzaga University houses a large collection of material related to Harry Lillis (Bing) Crosby. Bing was born on May 3, 1903 in Tacoma, Washington, the fourth child of Harry Lowe and Catherine C. Crosby. The family moved to Spokane in 1906. He received the nickname "Bing" a shortened name of his favorite comic strip character "Bingo," from the children's section in the local paper. Bing attended Webster Grade School and Gonzaga High School in Spokane. He entered Gonzaga College in 1920 and studied pre-law, but left prior to graduation to pursue a show business career. In 1937 the University awarded him an honorary doctoral degree.

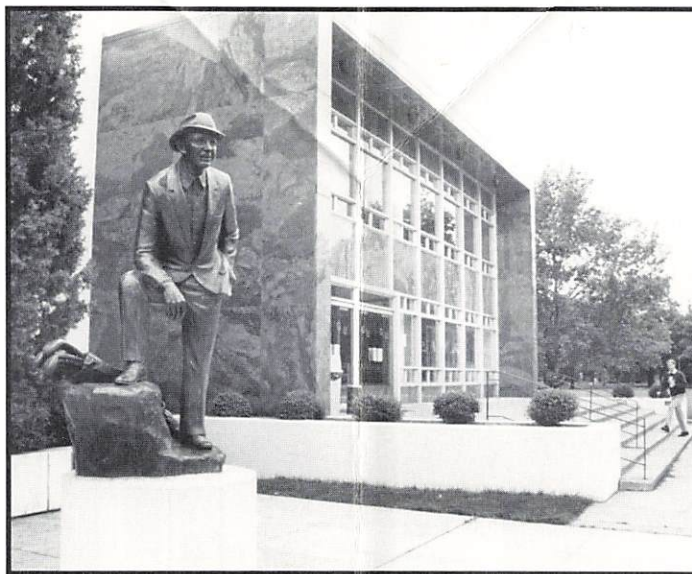


Former Archivist, Clifford Carroll, S.J. and Bing Crosby

After leaving Gonzaga, Crosby was kept busy cutting records, making movies, and performing radio shows. He teamed up with Bob Hope in the 1940s to produce the popular "Road to" movies and is noted for his roles in such movies as "The Bells of St. Mary's," "White Christmas," and "High Society." In 1945 Crosby received an Oscar for "Going My Way."

Crosby married Wilma W. Wyatt (Dixie Lee) in 1930. They had four boys: Gary Evan, Dennis Michael, Philip Lang, and Howard Lindsay. Dixie died of cancer in 1952. He later married Kathryn Grant in 1957 and had three children: Harry Lillis, Mary Frances, and Nathaniel Patrick.

Bing retained an interest and affection for Gonzaga University throughout his life. He contributed to the library building campaign by organizing a television show and giving the production rights to Gonzaga to secure funds for the library. The Bing Crosby Edsel Show, starring Bing, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Bob Hope, and Rosemary Clooney, aired on CBS on October 13, 1957 and received an Emmy Award. Through his efforts the Crosby Library was constructed and dedicated as a memorial to the Crosby family. Crosby died on October 4, 1977 of heart failure while on a golf course in Madrid, Spain.



Crosby Bronze, Crosby Student Center

After his death, a life-size bronze statue sculpted by local artist Deborah Copenhaver, was placed at the library's main entrance and dedicated on May 3, 1981. After the library moved into the Foley Center in 1992, the Crosby Library was converted into the Crosby Student Center, where the Crosbyana Room displays Bing's memorabilia. Over the years,

Gonzaga received generous donations of his memorabilia from Bing and from his family and friends. Today, Gonzaga still actively collects Crosby material, making Gonzaga's the largest public collection.

View the Collection

Visitors to the Crosbyana Room can see Bing's Oscar, gold and platinum records, photographs, books, and many trophies and awards he received.

Crosby's boyhood home, housing the Gonzaga Alumni Association, is located at E. 508 Sharp.

Visitors are welcome to view the memorabilia on display in the house during office hours, M-F, 8-4:30. Photographs of Bing and his classmates from high school and college days can be seen in the University Administration Building.

